AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 131

LITTLE PINKS

When exposed to a representative cross-section of ticket-buyers throughout the nation, Damon Runyon's LITTLE PINKS emerged low in the Third Class, with a vote 46 per cent below the average for all stories tested by the Institute.

We must emphasize, however, that our tests were confined to the original story as it appeared in COLLIERS. The screenplay has not been made available for testing.

LITTLE PINKS was found to be much stronger with females than with males, but even with females it is substantially below average. There is no significant difference by age-groups, by income-groups or by size of city.

The following reactions are typical of those recorded by our interviewers in the field:

FAVORABLE

"*It has a great deal of human pathos—the type of thing Dickens might have written.*"—22-year-old woman clerical worker in Denver.

"*A brave, emotional, human story.*"—29-year-old wife of sales manager, New York City.

"*Sounds a little sad, but very nice.*"—18-year-old daughter of bartender in New York City.

"*This sounds good—it's different—it's not the usual combination of two people falling in love.*"—19-year-old college student, father a superintendent in canning factory, Indianapolis.

"*It was a magazine story—might be good—appealing.*"—25-year-old female researcher for W. P. A. Trenton.

UNFAVORABLE

"I don't like sad shows like that where people are crippled and make sacrifices."—24-year-old stenographer in Chicago.

"It sounds like a second-rate picture. I can't imagine a real star in it."—35-year-old wife of cafe manager in Des Moines.

"Just an obvious tear-jerker."—30-year-old salesman in music shop, New York City.

"The name LITTLE PINKS *kills all curiosity in the picture."*—40-year-old funeral director in Philadelphia.

More than half the persons interviewed objected to LITTLE PINKS on the ground that it is too sad. A significant proportion volunteered adverse comment on the title.

Princeton, December 17, 1941

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AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 132

A PLAGUE ON YOU

BACKGROUND

On September 4 it was announced that RKO had purchased Carroll Graham's unpublished novel "A PLAGUE ON YOU". Five weeks later the INSTITUTE was instructed to determine the audience acceptance value of this property. Only a synopsis of the novel was submitted by the studio; the Lewis Foster screenplay has not been made available.

Inasmuch as the book has not yet been published, there is an *X* in the equation until the popularity of the book is established. Presumably its motion picture acceptance value would be enhanced if and when it became a best-seller.

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE VALUE

A PLAGUE ON YOU received a vote of 50 per cent in the nationwide poll conducted by the INSTITUTE, just qualifying for classification as a Second Class story.

The property is slightly stronger with females than with males; it is stronger with the lower income groups than with the rich; and it is stronger in small towns than in the cities.

A significant proportion of all persons interviewed recognized a resemblance to YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU.

The following comments are typical of those recorded by our interviewers in the field:

FAVORABLE

> *"It would be full of fun—laughs and gags."*—21-year-old counter girl in 5 & 10¢ store, St. Joseph, Mo.
>
> *"It has comedy and romance both."*—49-year-old practical nurse, Omaha, Nebraska.
>
> *"Bohemian ain't it?"* — 44-year-old wife of mechanic in Danbury, Conn.

"*It's cute and lively. It'll take your mind off everyday worries.*"—54-year-old widow of linoleum layer in Connellsville, Pa.

"*I like that—all the people in the house being screwy.*"—14-year-old son of janitor in San Francisco.

"*It sounds vulgar to me.*"—35-year-old tax-collector in rural Pennsylvania.

"*It might make a hilarious picture.*"—43-year-old printer in Birmingham, Alabama.

"*It would be amusing. Reminds me of* YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU."—24-year-old carpenter in Boston.

UNFAVORABLE

"*Harmless, but you have nothing to remember.*"—20-year-old elevator girl in Philadelphia.

"*Nothing solid behind it.*"—25-year-old compositer in New York City.

"*It doesn't make sense.*"—24-year-old woman switchboard operator in New York City.

"*Not even fair. A "B" picture.*"—29-year-old woman, box-lunch operator in Chicago.

"*Too mixed around and unbelievable.*"—16-year-old son of junk dealer in New Brunswick.

Our studies have shown that the audience acceptance value of stories of this type is more dependent upon the quality of the writing which goes into the screen play than is generally the case with other types of story. Furthermore, it is only very rarely that an unheard-of comedy emerges high unless it is tested with a distinguished comedy *cast*.

We therefore recommend that A PLAGUE ON YOU be tested again when the screenplay is available and when the names of the proposed players can be included.

Princeton, January 2, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 133

MR. WHISKERS

In a nationwide test conducted during the last week in November, MR. WHISKERS (a magazine story by John Oates Bering) received a vote of 46 per cent—8 per cent below the average for all stories tested by the INSTITUTE; which places it in the Third Class.

The audience acceptance value of MR. WHISKERS shows no appreciable variation by age, by sex, or by size of community, but is slightly greater with the poor than with the rich. Almost all the other stories about gangsters tested by the INSTITUTE have shown up strongly with males in the younger age groups. The fact that MR. WHISKERS fails to do this appears to be due to these facts:

1. The story is what some ticket-buyers call "preachy".
2. There is not so much gunfire and action as is present in most gangster pictures.
3. The love element is strong enough to alienate the younger male elements in the audience.

At the same time there is enough of the gangster element in the story to alienate a large proportion of female ticket-buyers. In a word, MR. WHISKERS seems to have most of the disadvantages of a gangster story with few of the advantages.

The following comments, selected from those recorded verbatim by our interviewers, are representative:

FAVORABLE

"It sounds human—*like a real life drama."*—34-year-old hospital attendant in Lowell, Mass.

"It contains sadness and joy both, with a happy ending."—29-year-old wife of assembler in Chicago defense factory.

"I'd like to see the change in a reformed gambler."—25-year-old worker in bottling plant, Chicago.

"I like to see any person that's down come back."—32-year-old revenue department supervisor in Denver.

"Gamblers and racketeers make an exciting story."—30-year-old gas station attendant in Lexington, Kentucky.

UNFAVORABLE

"Impossible melodrama—not true to life—very few men like that turn honest."—63-year-old gynecologist, Yonkers.

"It's too goody-goody."—26-year-old proof-reader in New York.

"I don't like movies that try to convey a good lesson to you." —24-year-old secretary in girls' school, Philadelphia.

"Don't care for stories that preach."—21-year-old female city clerk in Newark.

"Believe me — it has *whiskers — old stuff."* — 24-year-old student, son of doctor in Minneapolis.

"The title doesn't even go with the story."—14-year-old son of cigar store owner in New York City.

"Corny" "Lousy" "A stinker" "Hash" "Cliche" "Droopy"

It must be emphasized that our tests were confined to the synopsis submitted by RKO. No treatment or screenplay was available.

Princeton, January 2, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 134

72 HOURS BY TRAIN

BACKGROUND

On October 28 the trade-press announced that RKO had purchased Walter Doniger's original "72 HOURS BY TRAIN". Two weeks later the INSTITUTE was instructed to determine the audience acceptance value of this property.

To quote the RKO synopsis, upon which our tests were based, 72 HOURS BY TRAIN is about a man "forced by circumstances to act as an FBI agent; in company with the girl agent he loves, he succeeds in transporting a German diplomat to New York by special prison train, despite dangerous plots of Gestapo agents".

Our tests were completed twenty-four hours before the outbreak of war.

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE VALUE

72 HOURS BY TRAIN received a vote of 58 per cent, only two points below the select First Class. It emerged very much higher than the somewhat similar JOURNEY INTO FEAR, which was tested by the INSTITUTE three months ago.

The story is stronger with males than with females, and is stronger with the younger age-groups than with the older. Readers of our recent report on THE VERDICT OF THE BOX-OFFICE will recognize that these two factors constitute a definite plus.

72 HOURS BY TRAIN is also somewhat stronger with the poor than with the wealthy—another healthy sign in terms of box-office expectancy. Even with the wealthy it is above average.

There is no significant variation by size of community.

The following comments are typical of those recorded by our interviewers throughout the United States:

Favorable

"It's all about the G-men and they are good pictures."—14-year-old son of day laborer in Lexington, Ky.

"I like this kind of story that packs a lot of thrills."—19-year-old son of insurance agency manager in Astoria, L. I., N. Y.

"The story is like UNDERGROUND. *It is something different."*—24-year-old cleaning store clerk in Pittsburgh.

"Would be interesting, especially on account of the trouble today."—42-year-old pattern maker in machine shop in Rochester, N. Y.

"I think it might have appeal to us right now."—49-year-old clerk in finance office in Russellville, Arkansas.

"I liked MAN HUNT."—18-year-old salesman in St. Louis.

"It's the kind that holds your interest all the way through."—29-year-old wife of barber in West Liberty, Iowa.

"It's different—usually you hear about some other country—this is about the U. S. G-Men."—20-year-old wife of farmer in West Liberty, Iowa.

"You wouldn't be likely to sleep through anything like this."—27-year-old type-setter in printing company in New York City.

"It's a lot of action. UNDERGROUND *was swell."*—15-year-old son of auto mechanic in San Francisco.

"You bet. This is a great story."—35-year-old cafe owner in Kutztown, Pa.

"Makes my blood stir."—35-year-old policeman in Bronx, N. Y.

"Because I like G-Men stories, especially if it deals with knocking some of those Germans off."—50-year-old court clerk in Kansas City.

UNFAVORABLE

"I'll like this done only by Hitchcock."—29-year-old secretary in Astoria, L. I., N. Y.

"Kid stuff—that kind of stuff doesn't happen."—30-year-old order cook in Rochester, N. Y.

"Sounds trashy—superman stuff." — 28-year-old recreation business owner in Denver, Colo.

"Too much like the Dime Novel."—37-year-old newspaper man in Chicago.

"Read 'Out of the Night'—don't want to hear any more about Gestapo."—33-year-old general electric office worker in Schenectedy, N. Y.

"All propaganda and nothing true about it."—15-year-old son of riveter in Brooklyn.

"It's too grim."—30-year-old wife of florist in New York City.

"Too much like a story book."—48-year-old real estate broker in Lowell, Mass.

"I don't like nothing about those foreign movies with those Nazis."—14-year-old son of ice-man in New York City.

"No! It's one of those gruesome, torture pictures again."—18-year-old mailboy for Public Service in Newark.

"It's too scary."—14-year-old daughter of telegrapher in Chillicothe, Ohio.

In the light of the fact that our tests were conducted before America's entrance into the war, it is interesting to note that the most frequent single criticism of this story was that it contained propaganda for war.

Since this objection is no longer valid, it may be presumed that the story would now do better. However, only further tests can decide the point.

A study just completed by the Institute suggests that subjects related to the war now have greater acceptance value in the areas most remote from war (i. e. the Middle West) than in areas where war has already assumed some reality (i. e. the Pacific Coast).

The results of this study indicate that American audiences are likely to go through the same transition as British audiences—some demand for war stories at first, followed by an increasing trend towards purely escapist entertainment. Such a conclusion, however, must be regarded as purely tentative until we have been able to assemble more conclusive evidence.

Princeton, January 8, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 135

FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE

BACKGROUND

FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE, adapted by Brian Doherty from Bruce Marshall's novel, opened on Broadway in November 1937. It played one hundred and twenty-five performances, being withdrawn in March 1938 and sent on tour. Chicago did not like it, and the remainder of the tour was cancelled. Said Burns Mantle in his annual review: "Though it was named in the Church's white list of plays, FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE lacked the full support of Catholics . . . The play was an eccentricity of humorous folklore against a religious backgroud, which did not arouse a strong theatergoing interest. When people heard that it dealt with the miraculous levitation of a cabaret from its city site to a distant island, they said 'Oh, folderol' and went to some movie."

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE VALUE

The INSTITUTE tested two different treatments of FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE. One emphasized the comedy aspect of the story; the other emphasized the religious motive in the levitation. Both emerged low in the third class (29 per cent and 42 per cent respectively).

The story is found to be equally weak with ticket-buyers of all ages, but on the basis of its religious background it emerges slightly stronger with females than with males—although far below average even with females.

While none of the persons interviewed in our surveys were as articulate as Mr. Burns Mantle, the following typical comments tell substantially the same story:

UNFAVORABLE

"I don't like them imagination shows."—44-year-old farmer in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

"I'll take my religion in church."—28-year-old janitor in St. Joseph, Mo.

"You shouldn't mix priests and night clubs."—40-year-old cook in hotel, New York.

"I don't think you should have a comedy about a monk. They don't seem to go together."—36-year-old woman school teacher in Newark, N. J.

"What an old man does wouldn't interest me."—14-year-old son of pharmacist in Philadelphia.

"I don't like the mixture of religion and night clubs. It's kind of antagonizing."—30-year-old waitress in Connellsville, Pa.

"Too goody-goody."

"Too fantastic."

FAVORABLE

"This sounds like it would be inspiring."—17-year-old daughter of auto salesman in Chicago.

"A good lesson in religion."—19-year-old daughter of chain grocery manager in Philadelphia.

"I heard something about it when it was a play three or four years ago."—30-year-old railroad trackman in New Brunswick, N. J.

*"I saw a similar show that was good—*BROTHER ORCHID.*"*—20-year-old purchasing clerk in Zanesville, Ohio.

"Might be good, like HERE COMES MR. JORDAN *or* TOPPER.*"*—25-year-old drug-store salesman in New York.

"It sounds very unusual."—24-year-old manager of newspaper substation in Detroit.

"I'd like to see how he could make them disappear."—19-year-old daughter of welder in Cleveland.

The most frequently repeated reaction to this property is that it is "too fantastic".

In addition, there seems to be a conflict in the mind of the average ticket-buyer between religion and humor.

Our results suggest a moderate success for FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE among the sophisticated elements in a few large cities. Elsewhere the indications are not favorable.

Princeton, January 9, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 136

CHEYENNE

BACKGROUND

On November 10 it was announced that RKO had purchased from Walter Wanger his treatment of and screen rights in CHEYENNE, an original story by William Rankin and Winston Miller. Four days later the INSTITUTE received instructions to determine the audience acceptance value of this property.

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE VALUE

In recent months the INSTITUTE has made it a practice to test story properties in at least *two* nationwide surveys, using two different and independently prepared synopses. In the case of CHEYENNE the synopses were written by two members of the INSTITUTE's headquarters staff. The results of the two polls were identical: each time CHEYENNE emerged in the Third Class with a vote of 42 per cent.

CHEYENNE is relatively strong with adolescents, but is far below average with theatergoers over eighteen—who normally account for 74 per cent of all tickets purchased. The story is somewhat above average with ticket-buyers whose family income is below $30 per week, but is below average with all other income groups. It is stronger in towns under 10,000 than in the larger communities. In cities over 500,000 it is conspicuously weak.

The following comments are typical:

FAVORABLE

> "*Sounds like it would be a lot of fun.*"—21-year-old clerk in St. Joseph, Mo.
>
> "*I've never seen one just like this. I like good westerns.*"—17-year-old daughter of truck gardener in Columbus, Ohio.
>
> "*I don't ordinarily care for westerns, but this sounds like a good one.*"—34-year-old wife of physician in Detroit.

"Sounds like a real good love story."—21-year-old wife of farmer in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

"I like that kind of a picture—it's exciting and keeps you on edge all the time—a rodeo picture."—21-year-old wife of garage mechanic in Boston.

UNFAVORABLE

"I like some wild-west shows but not rodeos."—16-year-old son of gas station operator in Columbus, Ohio.

"It's too much like dude ranch stuff."—26-year-old man, case-worker for Welfare Department in Detroit.

"It just doesn't seem right. I like cowboy pictures—but there is too much love stuff in it."—13-year-old son of lineman for electric company in Denver.

"I like the historical *westerns—rather than this rodeo."*—21-year-old student, son of dentist in San Francisco.

"If it wasn't a cowboy setting—I'd like it for the love."—30-year-old waitress in Connellsville, Pa.

"Just strikes me as a typical double feature—the poor one." —32-year-old woman—office manager in publishing house in New Brunswick, N. J.

Our tests were conducted without reference to cast.

Princeton, January 10, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 137

HANDFUL OF HEAVEN, alias ON SPECIAL SERVICE

Although the hero of Captain William T. Ryder's five-page original is an R. A. F. bomber pilot, the story is a romance set entirely in New York, without any conspicuous element of *action.* That fact may go a long way towards explaining why Handful Of Heaven emerged in the Third Class (38 per cent) when tested by the Institute a few days prior to the outbreak of war.

Prior to the appearance of Colin Kelly and other native heroes, R. A. F. pilots seemed to typify a very special brand of knight-errantry in the eyes of American ticket-buyers. In this case, however, even the fact that Philip Atwell is an R. A. F. pilot failed to redeem the story in the eyes of male ticket-buyers.

Handful Of Heaven scores with inveterate romance addicts, and for that reason it is almost up to average in appeal for adult females.

It is weakest in New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia and other cities over 500,000.

The following reactions are typical of those expressed to our interviewers:

Favorable

"*It's interesting—along the lines of* Yank In The R. A. F." —19-year-old machinist in Denver.

"*I suppose I'd like the sacrifice he made.*"—25-year-old stenographer in Boston.

"*A strong and warm love story, and after all love keeps the world going.*"—24-year-old school nurse in Philadelphia.

"*Filled with romance and excitement.*"—17-year-old girl employed in laundry, New York.

"*Yes*—if *it had airplanes in it. All airplane pictures are good,*" —32-year-old day laborer in Lafayette, Alabama.

UNFAVORABLE

"*Too much like* YANK IN THE R. A. F. *Get something* new!" —19-year-old soda-clerk in drug-store, Lansford, Pa.

"*It's as if I've seen it before dozens of times.*"—32-year-old unemployed painter in San Francisco.

"*No! I like war stories but not when they are mostly about love.*"—20-year-old packer in department store, Brooklyn.

"*Nothing unusual about it. And not enough* action."—19-year-old floor-sander in Philadelphia.

Our tests were conducted without reference to cast, and were confined to the five-page original. Within the last twenty-four hours the Root-Fenton screenplay has reached the INSTITUTE for testing.

Princeton, January 13, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 138

HAPPY ENDING

BACKGROUND

On October 3 the trade-press reported that RKO had purchased Patterson McNutt's original story HAPPY ENDING. Five weeks later the INSTITUTE received instructions to determine the audience acceptance value of this property.

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE VALUE

Two different treatments were used in our tests. The first, which focused attention on Eddie the gambler as the central figure, emerged low in the Second Class with a vote of 51 per cent. The second, which gave equal prominence to Eddie and to his actress daughter, emerged in the Third Class, with a vote of 42 per cent.

The bitter-sweet quality of HAPPY ENDING enjoys some acceptance with female ticket-buyers, while the gambling background appeals to certain male elements in the audience. It must always be remembered, however, that betting interests the theatergoing public less than it interests the motion picture community in Hollywood; in one nationwide survey we found that fewer than one theatergoer in five (18 per cent) had placed a wager on the result of a horse-race during the past twelve months.

A disquieting number of the persons interviewed in our two surveys expressed the opinion that HAPPY ENDING would be what a 27-year-old steam-fitter in New York called "a *phoney* tear jerker."

While this property was tested for story value alone, time and again respondents volunteered the suggestion that Edward Arnold would be well suited for the role of Eddie the gambler.

The following comments are representative of those recorded by our interviewers throughout the United States:

FAVORABLE

> "*Well this is the most unusual show of its type that I've ever heard about. I think it would be interesting.*"—47-year-old doctor in Columbus, Ohio.
>
> "*Everybody condemns gambling and this would show their* good *side.*"—32-year-old flower-vendor in Philadelphia.
>
> "*You could see Edward Arnold in the role.*"—16-year-old son of machine worker in Brooklyn.

"The story appears a little different—an unselfish gambler." —21-year-old window-trimmer in Philadelphia.

"The strong father-daughter devotion appeals to me."—28-year-old daughter of driver for garage in Chicago.

"I'm a gambler myself—I play the horses."—63-year-old accountant in Brooklyn.

"I'm a sucker for this story—it's personal, pertinent and poignant."—34-year-old art promoter in Chicago.

"I like most any dramatic picture like that—especially the love of the gambler for his daughter."—31-year-old wife of tire-store partner in Fairfield, Iowa.

"I like stories about fabulous characters like this."—25-year-old actress, New York City.

"I like a dramatic picture—he shows unselfishness—there's a lot of selfishness in the world now."—49-year-old wife of stone-cutter in Lowell, Mass.

UNFAVORABLE

"Sounds like a phoney tear-jerker."—27-year-old steam fitter in New York City.

"This is the same old sob stuff."—32-year-old clerk in New Brunswick.

"Ah—nuts! A gambler should be bad to the end."—30-year-old wife of investment counsel in New York City.

"Hate maudlin sentimentality."—25-year-old unemployed clerk in Newark.

"That's a little too serious."—15-year-old son of farmer in Fairfield, Iowa.

"I don't like these sacrifice pictures."—49-year-old section-gang foreman in Omaha, Nebraska.

"Things like that don't ever happen."—31-year-old Woolworth salesgirl in St. Joseph, Missouri.

"I leave that kind for my wife to cry about."—30-year-old fireman in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania.

"It's too gooey with sentiment."—26-year-old chemist in Trenton, New Jersey.

Princeton, January 9, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

GONE WITH THE WIND

BACKGROUND

On January 28, 1942 the INSTITUTE was instructed to conduct an investigation, the object of which was to determine:

1) How many persons have seen GONE WITH THE WIND once, twice and more often.

2) What is the potential audience for the third play-off of GONE WITH THE WIND.

3) How the situation in Milwaukee and Buffalo compares with the national average.

4) How the situation in Canada compares with the situation in the United States.

5) What kind of advertising appeals are indicated by the character of the potential market.

PROCEDURE

In the course of this study the INSTITUTE's investigators have interviewed men and women of every age-group, in every income-level, in every type of community, and in all forty-eight states, carefully selected so as to form an almost perfect miniature of the whole population over 12 years of age. These investigators have questioned boys and girls, negroes and whites, coal miners and steel workers, shop girls and lawyers, plumbers and builders, W.P.A. workers and policemen. Altogether 12,655 persons have been interviewed.

The research techniques employed were developed during six years of experimentation in the field of audience research. Two previous INSTITUTE studies on GONE WITH THE WIND (January, 1939 and March, 1940) provided invaluable points of reference.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1) Total admissions up to February 10, 1942 were approximately 51,980,000.

2) Approximately 5,489,000 persons have seen the picture more than once.

3) The *potential* number of admissions for the third play-off is 12,500,000, but the *actual* number of admissions will depend upon the number of bookings, the playing time, the price structure and the exploitation.

4) The percentage of persons who plan to see the picture in Milwaukee is above the national average.

5) The advertising in Milwaukee yielded a 12 per cent increase in the number of persons planning to buy a ticket.

6) The potential in Buffalo is above the national average, though not to the same extent as in Milwaukee.

7) The Canadian poll is still in progress.

8) Only 34 per cent of the potential audience is made up of persons who have already seen the picture.

9) The majority market is composed of persons who have not yet seen the picture. They are concentrated in the lower income-groups and the younger age-groups.

10) An abnormally high proportion (71 per cent) of the persons who now plan to see the picture are *occasionals*, i.e. persons who go to the movies less than once a week. Special measures are required if the advertising is to reach these persons.

11) The results of a supplementary test reveal that a *bargain* appeal is strongest with the majority who have not yet seen the picture.

12) The same test revealed that a "repeat rationale" is strongest with the minority who have already seen the picture.

13) More than half the persons interviewed believe that GONE WITH THE WIND III would be cut.

14) Only 28 per cent said they would prefer it cut.

15) The best-remembered scenes are Atlanta burning and the wounded soldiers lying at the depot.

How many persons have seen Gone With The Wind?

We find that approximately 40,254,000 persons over 12 years of age have seen Gone With The Wind *once*, while 5,032,000 have seen it *twice* and 457,000 have seen it *three* times or more, making a total of approximately 51,980,000 admissions up to February 10, 1942.*

The number who have already seen the picture is made up as shown in the following tables:

I. BY AGE-GROUPS

	NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO HAVE SEEN G.W.T.W.				ADMISSIONS	COMPOSITION OF AUDIENCE	
	Once	*Twice*	*3 Times or more*	*Total*	*Total*	*G.W.T.W.*	*Average for all pix*
						%	%
Ages 12-20	8,341,000	1,056,000	76,000	9,473,000	10,916,000	21	32
21-30	9,685,000	1,771,000	122,000	11,578,000	13,515,000	26	30
31-40	8,385,000	1,013,000	38,000	9,436,000	10,596,000	20	18
41-50	6,546,000	687,000	119,000	7,352,000	8,317,000	16	11
Over 50	7,297,000	505,000	102,000	7,904,000	8,636,000	17	9
	40,254,000	5,032,000	457,000	45,743,000	51,980,000	100	100

II. BY INCOME-GROUPS

	NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO HAVE SEEN G.W.T.W.				ADMISSIONS	COMPOSITION OF AUDIENCE	
	Once	*Twice*	*3 Times or more*	*Total*	*Total*	*G.W.T.W.*	*Average for all pix*
						%	%
Income $60 up	6,365,000	903,000	174,000	7,442,000	8,698,000	17	12
$35-$60	15,588,000	2,047,000	168,000	17,803,000	20,419,000	39	36
$25-$35	7,755,000	1,664,000	92,000	9,011,000	10,408,000	20	23
Under $25	10,546,000	918,000	23,000	11,487,000	12,455,000	24	29
	40,254,000	5,032,000	457,000	45,743,000	51,980,000	100	100

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* These figures are subject to the statistical deviations common to all cross-section research. However the size of sample employed in this study was such as to insure a high level of accuracy.

III. BY HABITUAL AND OCCASIONAL MOVIEGOERS

	NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO HAVE SEEN G.W.T.W.				ADMISSIONS	COMPOSITION OF AUDIENCE	
	Once	*Twice*	*3 Times or more*	*Total*	*Total*	*G.W.T.W.*	*Average for all pix*
HABITUAL MOVIEGOERS (Once a week and up)	19,278,000	3,114,000	389,000	22,781,000	26,729,000	% 51	% 79
OCCASIONAL MOVIEGOERS (Less than once a week)	20,976,000	1,918,000	68,000	22,962,000	25,251,000	49	21
	40,254,000	5,032,000	457,000	45,743,000	51,980,000	100	100

What is the potential audience for the third play-off of GONE WITH THE WIND?

Before attempting to answer this question, we must remind the reader that the actual number who will see the picture during its third play-off is bound to be influenced by three factors which were not subject of our study. These factors are:

(A) The number of theaters which book the picture.
(B) The playing time accorded to it.
(C) The structure of admission prices.

We estimate that the *potential* number of admissions over twelve years of age during the third play-off will be 12,500,000. Whether or not this potential will actually be attained depends upon the theaters, the playing time, the prices and the exploitation. It must also be emphasized that a heavy volume of right exploitation could *increase* this potential.

We find that the potential is made up as follows:

	Number of Potential Admissions over 12 years of age	*Percentage of potential admissions*
		%
TOTAL	12,500,000	100
Persons who have already seen GONE WITH THE WIND	4,192,000	34
Persons who have not yet seen GONE WITH THE WIND	8,308,000	66
	12,500,000	100
AGES		
12-20	3,488,000	28
21-30	2,966,000	24
31-40	2,201,000	18
41-50	1,699,000	13
51-up	2,146,000	17
	12,500,000	100
FAMILY INCOME		
$60-up	1,059,000	9
$35-$60	3,504,000	28
$25-$35	2,519,000	20
Under $25	5,418,000	43
	12,500,000	100
Habitual Moviegoers (Once a week and up)	3,616,000	29
Occasional Moviegoers (Less than once a week)	8,884,000	71
	12,500,000	100

How does the situation in Milwaukee compare with the National average?

The INSTITUTE sent special investigators to Milwaukee to interview typical moviegoers—both habitual and occasional. Interviewing was divided into two periods—the first February 2 to 4, the second February 10 to 13.

Comparison of the results obtained in the two polling periods indicates that the advertising yielded a 12 per cent increase in the number of persons planning to buy a ticket.

Comparison of the results obtained in Milwaukee with the results obtained in the rest of the country indicates that box-office returns from this city should be not only above the *national* average, but also above the average for cities over 500,000.

On the day GONE WITH THE WIND opened at the Palace we found that 46 per cent of the population of Milwaukee knew what picture was playing at that theater. The comparable figures for the other first-run downtown theaters were 24 per cent, 8 per cent and 8 per cent respectively.

How does the situation in Buffalo compare with the National average?

The special poll in Milwaukee was duplicated in Buffalo. Results indicate that Buffalo should be above the national average, although not to the same extent as Milwaukee. The first part of the poll was conducted between February 1 and February 4. The picture has not yet opened here, and the second part of the poll is still in progress. For this reason the effects of the Buffalo advertising cannot yet be assessed.

What is the situation in Canada?

The Canadian poll is still in progress. Results will be available, three weeks from today.

What kind of advertising appeals are indicated by the character of the potential market?

The findings of our investigation throw light on the problem of how best to advertise GONE WITH THE WIND III.

1) We find that less than one half (34 per cent) of the potential audience is made up of persons who have already seen the picture. It follows, therefore, that any campaign which appeals primarily to persons who have already seen the picture *is appealing to the minority market*.

2) We find that the *majority* market is composed of persons who have not yet seen the picture. They are concentrated in the lower income-groups and the younger age-groups. In these groups the "seen" vote is smallest and the "want-to-see" vote is greatest.

3) In the case of persons in the lower income-groups we find that the main obstacle which stands between the desire to see GONE WITH THE WIND and the purchase of a ticket is *price*. Some are under the mistaken impression that the price schedule is still what it was during the first release; the others cannot afford to pay the necessary 40¢ to 60¢—*or think they cannot*. In such cases there appear to be two possible remedies: either to lower the price (making sure that everyone hears about the reduction), or to persuade the lower income-groups that they *can* afford the present price.

The first alternative may not be practicable. The second alternative requires heavy concentration on a *bargain* appeal—"$4,000,000 worth of picture for only 44¢" etc.

Obviously the details of this appeal must depend upon the price schedule obtaining at each theater and upon the exhibitors' willingness to plug his matinee prices. However, as it is reported by Loew's that at least 65 per cent of admissions to GONE WITH THE WIND II and III are at matinees, there should be no undue reluctance on the part of the exhibitor to plug his matinee prices.

4) We find that the market for GONE WITH THE WIND III is disproportionately strong in the 12-20 age-group, for two main reasons:

A. We have found that frequency of attendance reaches its peak in the teen age; and at least four million children have entered their teens since GONE WITH THE WIND was first released.

B. The price obstacle (real and assumed) has operated almost as powerfully against kids as against the lower income-groups. The two available remedies are those already prescribed for the lower income-groups.

5) We find that an abnormally high proportion of the persons who have already seen GONE WITH THE WIND are *occasional* theatergoers, i.e., persons who go less than once a week. Similarly we find that an abnormally high proportion (71 per cent) of the persons who now *plan* to see GONE WITH THE WIND III are occasionals.

It is therefore important to insure that these occasional theatergoers are reached by the advertising—that they know about the picture being back in town. The problem is, how to reach them? We have found that they have a pronounced tendency to by-pass the movie-page in their newspapers.

This fact suggests that it might be sound strategy to offer the exhibitor some special inducement to spend *part* of his advertising budget on general news pages—*in addition* to space on the movie-page.

6) The results of a supplementary test show that, whereas the bargain-appeal is strongest with the majority who have not yet seen the picture, a "repeat rationale" is strongest with the rest of the potential market.

In this test four different "repeat rationales" were tried. The winner was the most obvious—"5,489,109 Americans Have Seen GONE WITH THE WIND twice, three times, or more often", etc.

Next came an attempt to make the argument topical in these terms: "In war-torn London GONE WITH THE WIND played to packed houses for 57 weeks" etc.

The third took the form of a quiz: "...how many times was Scarlett married, was Melanie's child a girl or a boy, what happened to Ashley in the end, how did Rhett make his fortune, what was the last word in the movie," etc.

The fourth used celebrity-testimonial technique to plant the same suggestion.

7) We find that there are very few potential ticket-buyers who are not already familiar with the sales arguments for the picture itself—the quality of the production, the story, the stars, the technicolor, etc. In this respect there is no more selling to be done—you would be preaching to the converted or the unconvertable. Nevertheless, scrutiny of the comments recorded verbatim by our interviewers in the field reveals that some ticket-buyers are thinking of GONE WITH THE WIND in terms of *history*—an impression which could act as a powerful deterrent. This finding suggests that it would be good strategy to concentrate on the more *human* aspects of the story.

8) More than half of the persons interviewed in our survey (53 per cent) expressed the belief that GONE WITH THE WIND III would not be full length. Only 28 per cent said that they would *prefer* to see it shortened. It is therefore necessary for the advertisements to emphasize the fact that the picture will be shown in its entirety.

9) When we asked a representative cross-section of persons who had already seen the picture *which scenes they remembered best*, results were as follows:

SCENES BEST REMEMBERED IN ORDER OF MENTION:

1. Atlanta burning.
2. Wounded soldiers lying at the depot.
3. Scarlett falls down staircase.
4. "I don't give a damn".
5. Bonnie killed.
6. Scarlett eating turnips.
7. Return to Tara.
8. Scarlett shoots the soldier.
9. Scarlett carried upstairs.
10. Melanie's confinement.
11. Rhett driving Scarlett.
12. The garden party.

10) It is relevant to report that most of the persons who plan to see the picture again were found to be motivated by a desire to catch the points which they missed, or to remind themselves of the scenes which they have forgotten, rather than to see again the scenes which they best remember.

Princeton, February 19, 1942

Report No. 144

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 139

CALL OF THE CARIOCA

In two separate nationwide surveys CALL OF THE CARIOCA by Richard English and Edward Haldeman was exposed to representative cross-sections of the ticket-buying public. The story registered a vote of 47 per cent, which places it high in the Third Class.

On the credit side we find that a fair proportion of ticket-buyers, particularly in the smaller cities and the lower income groups, regard CALL OF THE CARIOCA as a snappy comedy-romance.

Unfortunately, however, a significant percentage of all persons interviewed are of the opinion that CALL OF THE CARIOCA is too much like other South American films which they have seen in the recent past. As we have previously had occasion to report, in connection with certain other types of property, the more frequently a formula is milked, the more perspicacious the public becomes, and the more necessary it is to differentiate your story from its immediate predecessors.

Although neither of the synopses used in our polls contained any reference to music, a large number of theatergoers inferred that CALL OF THE CARIOCA must be along the lines of DOWN ARGENTINE WAY, THEY MET IN ARGENTINA, THAT NIGHTIN RIO, ARGENTINE NIGHTS, WEEKEND IN HAVANA, etc. Such players as Carmen Miranda, Alice Faye and Don Ameche were repeatedly suggested as suitable for the picture.*

Suspecting that the *title* was largely responsible for this misapprehension, we conducted a special title test, running the title CALL OF THE CARIOCA against the title THEY MET IN A TAXI. The latter won by a small margin. When asked to guess from the title alone what the picture would be about, almost half the persons interviewed (44 per cent) guessed that CALL OF THE CARIOCA would be a musical. By contrast, 95 per cent guessed that THEY MET IN A TAXI would be a "love story" or a "comedy."

It might be difficult to exploit the comedy values of CALL OF THE CARIOCA without burlesquing the native guides of Rio de Janeiro. In fact, many theatergoers point out that the basic situation in this story implies a somewhat insulting and undemocratic attitude towards our "good neighbors."

*** Since no cast was specified we had to test the story without cast.**

FAVORABLE

"I like South American pictures—rhumbas, cariocas, etc."—21-year-old secretary in Schenectady.

"I like the Latin flavor."—33-year-old wife of insurance salesman in Russellville, Ark.

"Maybe I could find out whether I rhumba properly."—16-year-old daughter of clerk in Chicago.

"It would be gay and fast-moving."—37-year-old disabled man—dependent on sister who operates beauty shop in Cleveland.

"There is a comic romance to it which I like."—16-year-old daughter of laundry driver in Chicago.

"Complete relaxation."—38-year-old teacher in Brooklyn.

"Intriguing and colorful."—46-year-old reporter in Meridian, Miss.

"Sounds like nice material for a clever love story."—40-year-old accountant in department store, Chillicothe, Ohio.

"It's nothing new but it's crazy—a dreamy type I like."—23-year-old musician in an orchestra in New York City.

"I'd like to see how these people in hot water wiggle out of it."—20-year-old mill mechanic in Chicago.

"I think it would be exiting when Jim keeps getting in deeper."—16-year-old daughter of farmer in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

"I think it would make you think of what's going to happen next—take your mind off your troubles."—21-year-old cafe waitress in Boston.

UNFAVORABLE

"Every picture of this type has been a slander on Latin America."—29-year-old male secretary in Chicago.

"No, please. Haven't we done enough to insult the South Americans?" — 32-year-old corporation lawyer in New York.

> *"Quite the most ridiculous piece of nonsense I've ever heard of. Those Latin-lover things bore me to distraction."*—52-year-old widow of railroad official, Lexington, Ky.
>
> *"Pooh! If they are putting on trash like that, I'll quit going."*—27-year-old musical comedy actor in St. Louis.
>
> *"I've been disappointed in South American movies."*—26-year-old clerical worker in Boston.
>
> *"Just like all other South American pictures. Too damn many of them."*—19-year-old student in San Francisco.
>
> *"It sounds like one of these Don Ameche things."*—26-year-old stenographer in law office in New York City.
>
> *"It seems kind of funny about the schoolmate popping up there. I don't care too much for the South American pieces."*—25-year-old student-son of railroad engineer in San Francisco.
>
> *"Drippy." "Just junk." "Stinkaroo." "Unreal." "Far-fetched."*

In most of these comments the reader will recognize the ordinary ticket-buyer's inveterate tendency to reduce pictures to their basic elements—and to vote *pro* or *con* accordingly. If you stop men and women on the way into theaters and question them on the factors which decided them to select that particular picture, you will be surprised to find how *crudely* they have appraised the picture of their choice.

While the story of CALL OF THE CARIOCA might be adequate as the basis for a *musical*, it appears to be somewhat too flimsy to attract ticket-buyers as a romantic comedy *without* music.

Princeton, January 12, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 140

GWANGI

BACKGROUND

At the RKO Convention in June 1941, it was announced that RKO would make GWANGI. Seven months later the INSTITUTE received instructions to determine the audience acceptance value of this property. These instructions reached Princeton on January 5; they included the provision that our survey must be completed before January 15.

Since this picture is a distinct departure from the entertainment to which theatergoers are accustomed, we would normally subject it to more intensive tests than are required for most properties. Unfortunately it has not been possible, within this ten day period, to conduct quite such an exhaustive study as the property demands. For that reason our findings cannot be regarded as more than tentative.

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE VALUE

It is difficult to estimate the effect of the novelty of GWANGI. Because of this unknown quantity, it is possible that GWANGI *might* emulate the box-office success of KING KONG. However, our survey has produced no evidence that it will actually do so.

Males and females in each age-group, each income-group, every size of community and geographical region, carefully selected so as to form an accurate miniature of the total ticket-buying public, were interviewed in three separate studies. A different synopsis was used in each instance. The property received an average vote of 37 per cent, thus qualifying for inclusion in the Third Class.

GWANGI is strong with children, but even with them it is not tops. When our first studies revealed the fact that the property is strongest among theatergoers under 18, we conducted a special survey among children from 6 to 18. In this study, an adventure story tested under the title WINGS OVER THE FOREST received almost twice as many votes as GWANGI, except in the 6 to 8 age-group, where GWANGI swept the board. Most children in this age-group pay eleven cents at the box-office.

Likewise, GWANGI is relatively stronger among the poor than among the more prosperous groups. But even among the poor, GWANGI was not strong enough to lift it above average.

A previous study revealed that few persons agree on the pronunciation of the title "GWANGI."

60 per cent pronounce the second G hard, as in 'gone'
40 per cent pronounce the second G soft, as in 'gee'
56 per cent pronounce the A broad, as in 'marble'
44 per cent pronounce the A flat, as in 'hat'

There is reason to believe that titles which are difficult to pronounce form an impediment to the snowball word-of-mouth publicity.

The following comments are typical of those recorded by our interviewers throughout the United States:

FAVORABLE

"I'd like to see the monster picture."—7-year-old daughter of school custodian in New York City.

"It's a funny name and I guess when he gets loose they have trouble."—10-year-old son of automobile worker in Philadelphia.

"I like the rodeo and I like animals and horses."—11-year-old daughter of a doctor in New York City.

"Because it's about a circus and looks like adventure, because the thing breaks loose."—13-year-old son of flag-man at railroad crossing in Philadelphia.

"Because I like fantastic things like 'Lost Valley.' "—14-year-old daughter of wholesale liquor dealer in East Orange, N. J.

"It makes you excited and scared."—10-year-old daughter of tailor in New York City.

"Oh boy!!"—12-year-old son of carrier-driver in Denver, Colorado.

"It's a cowboy picture and I like those pictures with prehistoric monsters in it."—13-year-old son of crane man in navy yard, New York City.

"It seems to have some interesting things in it—the monster himself would be interesting, how they capture him, how they go about it."—15-year-old son of starter for Boston-Maine transportation company in Lowell, Mass.

"Sounds very thrilling."—15-year-old daughter of railroad porter in New York City.

"I'd like to see what the monster does."—15-year-old son of bartender in East Orange, N. J.

"I hate cowboy pictures but I'd like the part about the prehistoric monster."—15-year-old daughter of calculating machine inspector in San Francisco.

"I like those nutty things."—17-year-old daughter of restaurant-waiter in New York City.

"Sounds interesting. Prehistoric animals, something different."—17-year-old son of interior decorator in Cleveland.

"It looks interesting—I go for these thrillers and I certainly liked KING KONG." — 22-year-old soldier, former truck-driver in Denver, Colorado.

"It'd be scarey-like—I like those spooky pictures."—48-year-old man, laborer for town, Bedford, Mass.

"I like weird Frankenstein type of pictures."—30-year-old electrical appliance salesman in Connellsville, Pa.

"It's so fantastic, it's fascinating."—62-year-old lumber dealer in New Brunswick, N. J.

"I go for that stuff. It brings out the animal in men. . We're all like kids."—29-year-old 2nd Lieutenant in U. S. Army, Brooklyn, N. Y.

UNFAVORABLE

"That sounds too scarey."—10-year-old daughter of dentist in Philadelphia.

"No! It's a fairy tale."—12-year-old son of garage mechanic in Lowell, Mass.

"That's too scarey and gives you the creeps."—12-year-old daughter of nurse in Philadelphia.

"Might be all right for little kids."—14-year-old son of loom fixer in woolen mill in Lowell, Mass.

"Wouldn't like this—too wild."—14-year-old daughter of hotel doorman in New York City.

"I've out-lived horror thrillers, I guess." — 14½-year-old daughter of dress-ironer in factory in New York City.

"Don't like that no how—too dumb."—16-year-old daughter of supervisor in traction company, Philadelphia.

"That's one of those 'come back next week.'"—17-year-old daughter of coal and ice dealer in Philadelphia.

"It ain't got no feminine interest."—16-year-old son of operator on ladies dresses in New York City.

"More for kids."—17-year-old son of lawyer in New York City.

"KING KONG *cured me."*—18-year-old student, son of automobile dealer in Lexington, Ky.

"I like this kind but my wife doesn't—we go together."—45-year-old Drug Store owner in Adel, Iowa.

"I definitely *don't want to see that. I don't like impossible things."* — 32-year-old woman, librarian in Richmond, Virginia.

"Not much on prehistorics."—40-year-old man, interviewer for city employment bureau, Richmond, Virginia.

"Too scarey to me. Makes me nervous."—32-year-old part-time maid in Chillicothe, Ohio.

"Don't care for that stuff. Bad for the younger element."—39-year-old man, bank accountant in East Orange, N. J.

"Good night—no! I hate cowboy movies."—21-year-old wife of food produce salesman in East Orange, N. J.

"I hate those things—it's fantastic, impossible—this monster."—39-year-old wife of hotel clerk in San Francisco.

"It has no human interest." — 46-year-old crane-man in Farrell, Pa.

"That's a boy's picture—too spooky for me."—16-year-old daughter of painter in Boston.

Princeton, January 20, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 141

TICKET-BUYERS REACT TO WAR

An important function of audience research is to provide the motion picture executive with advance information in situations where his experience includes no previous points of reference. For example, now that war has come to the United States, will pictures with a war background become *more* or *less* popular? Audience research can provide valuable information on this problem months before the verdict of the box-office becomes conclusive.

Twenty-four hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor the INSTITUTE began to question theatergoers on their reactions to war stories, to war footage in newsreels and to other related problems. In this report we shall record the results which we have obtained up to January 17, postponing any attempt to draw positive conclusions until we have been able to accumulate more data.

1) "A LIFT FOR A MILLION"

When tested during November 1941 this original by Fritz Kortner, which concerns the comic adventures of an automobile salesman drafted into a tank division of the U. S. Army, received a vote of 44 per cent, thus qualifying for inclusion in the *Third* Class, which is the lowest class.

When retested during the first week of January, the same story received a vote of 61 per cent, thus qualifying for inclusion in the rare *First* Class. More ticket-buyers now identify themselves with draftee Timothy Potter, and others are interested for the first time because they have a brother, son or boy-friend who now expects to join the armed forces. The draft has suddenly become a more imminent and more serious reality.

2) "CHINA SKY"

On October 23rd we reported that Pearl Buck's CHINA SKY was one of the twelve strongest stories ever tested by the INSTITUTE. Today, following the outbreak of hostilities in the Orient, we are in a position to report a notable increase in the story's audience acceptance value. Where in October it scored a vote of 63 per cent, today it scores a vote of 81 per cent. No other story has emerged so high since the INSTITUTE started working with RKO.

The increase in vote from 63 per to 81 per cent comes largely from the low income groups and the younger age groups who now see a more real connection between what is going on in the Orient and their own lives. Said a farmer in rural Iowa: "That's interesting the way things are now. I'd like to see what it's like to be bombed."

3) "ARMY SURGEON"

In February 1941 ARMY SURGEON received a vote of 66 per cent, which placed it in the select First Class. During the second week in January 1942 we retested the story, transferring the scene from France in World War I to the Orient in World War II. This time it received a vote of 73 per cent. As in the case of CHINA SKY, the increased vote comes largely from the lower income groups and the younger age groups.

4) "THE AMERICAN WAY"

THE AMERICAN WAY has emerged considerably higher since the outbreak of war than it emerged in tests conducted eight months ago. The following comments, selected from those recorded by our reporters in the field, indicate the reasons for this property's increase in audience appeal:

> "*Something we are fighting for right now.*"—19-year-old girl, bill sorter in mail order house in Denver, Col.
>
> "*It kinda fits into the way things are going on now.*"—20-year-old student, son of cotton ginner in Russellville, Ark.
>
> "*I guess because we're all hepped up over this war.*"—22-year-old 5 and 10¢ clerk in Lansford, Pa.
>
> "*I'd like to see it in times like these.*"—41-year-old wife of manager of fertilizing company in Meridian, Miss.
>
> "*Because we're right in it now.*"—46-year-old woman, daughter of deceased doctor in Jacksonville, Ill.
>
> "*I saw the play and it should be a good movie especially at this time.*"—19-year-old son of machine operator in New Brunswick, N. J.
>
> "*Has possibilities of being very good—if there is a strict boundary line on the propaganda.*"—42-year-old lawyer in Philadelphia.

The replies to the following question (5) reflect the same wave of patriotic fervor.

5) **Would you yourself like to see more of the so-called patriotic movies, or do you think they are showing too many of them now?**

	November 1940	*January 1942*
	%	%
Would like to see more	60	62
Too many now	40	38

6) **In general, do you think that the newsreels show too much about the war or not enough?**

	September 1941	*January 1942*
	%	%
Too much about the war	36	27
Not enough	21	30
About right	43	43

In replies to this question we see a definite *increase* in demand for war footage in newsreels.

7) **If you were going to the movies tonight, which would you prefer to see—a picture about the present war, or a picture which has nothing to do with the war?**

Inspection of the replies reveals that this is not a good question. Most theatergoers interpret the first alternative—"a picture about the present war"—to mean a factual documentary on the actual fighting in Pearl Harbor and Hawaii. As might be supposed, the vote is *two to one* for "a picture which has nothing to do with the war." In the circumstances this means simply that the majority of theatergoers, if they had to choose, would rather see an entertainment feature than a war documentary. It does *not*, of course, imply that they would not want to see a feature picture with a war background.*

*** See 1), 2), and 3) above.**

Once the limitations of this particular question are fully understood, it becomes interesting to observe the variation in replies by geographical region:

	About Present War	*Nothing to do with the War*
	%	%
Pacific Coast	26	74
All other areas	38	62

This breakdown reveals that theatergoers in the area where war possesses the most imminent reality are the ones who least want to see documentaries about it. This finding is in line with newspaper reports on the development of British attitudes towards war documentaries during the last two years. It suggests the probable future trends here in the United States—as war becomes an ever-increasing reality not only to those living on the Pacific Coast, but to the rest of the nation.

8) **Do you think there has been too much propaganda in the movies lately?**

	November 1940	*April 1941*	*September 1941*	*January 1942*
	%	%	%	%
Yes, too much propaganda	25	32	32	25
No	60	54	56	66
No opinion	15	14	12	9

It is interesting to observe that one theatergoer in every four still thinks "there has been too much propaganda in the movies lately." Without going into details on what is to some extent a problem in semantics, we must observe that the vote *against* propaganda probably represents, more than anything else, a vote for entertainment without a message.

9) **Too much of *what* propaganda?**

	November 1940	*April 1941*	*September 1941*	*January 1942*
	%	%	%	%
Anti-Nazi	37	36	28	28
War	31	32	41	27*(sic!)*
Patriotic, flagwaving	12	9	13	4
Pro British	8	13	11	6
All other	13	15	8	35

Princeton, January 23, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 142

HOW MANY PICTURES SHOULD A STAR MAKE EVERY YEAR?

On June 27, 1941 we reported that any star who makes fewer than three pictures a year is liable to do serious damage to his or her power-to-sell tickets. This finding was based upon a statistical analysis of our Continuing Audit of Marquee Values for the period May 1, 1940 to April 30, 1941.

We have just repeated the same analysis for the twelve months ending October 31, 1941. The results are strikingly similar.

Number of Pictures Appeared In	*Number of Players In The Category*	*Average Gain or Loss in Marquee Value*
		%
0	4	—22
1	17	—11
2	29	+1
3	23	+9
4	15	+7
5	6	+7

It is apparent that any star who limits his income tax by confining himself to only one picture a year runs a serious risk of losing his power to sell tickets.

Princeton, January 22, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 143

YOUNG MAN OF CARACAS

BACKGROUND

On December 21 the INSTITUTE received the following instructions from the studio:

> "Will you please make a survey as to the number of people (and also the percentage of theatergoers) who have either read or heard of the book entitled THE YOUNG MAN FROM CARACAS by T. R. Ybarra? I am enclosing a 15-page synopsis of the book. *Perhaps it will furnish you with several story ideas which could be used in testing.*"

We replied as follows:

> "Could you be more specific as to the 'several story ideas?' We would prefer to rely on the ideas of your story department rather than on our guesses at the treatments which your writers might conceive."

On January 28 the studio finally instructed us to "go ahead and use as a basis for the test the 15-page synopsis previously sent you."

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE VALUE

When tested without cast, YOUNG MAN OF CARACAS emerges high in the Third Class, with a vote of 46 per cent. It is strongest with the older age-groups and the upper income-groups—which is usually the case with RKO stories (see Report 122).

Ives Washburn claim that 340,000 copies of the book had been sold up to the end of January, of which more than 90 per cent went to the BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB back in November. It appears that on the open market the book has not been inordinately successful, and, as we have pointed out elsewhere, there seems to be a vast difference—in terms of box-office—between the near-best seller and the real best-seller.

In a nation-wide survey completed on January 2, the INSTITUTE found that less than one per cent of all theatergoers had read YOUNG MAN OF CARACAS*. The normal relationship between copies sold and readers is one to six or seven, but in this case the book had not been in the libraries long enough to accumulate much secondary circulation. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether the 310,000 copies sold to members of the BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB will be read as much as copies bought in the open market.

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* The same survey revealed that 7 per cent had heard of it, while 2 per cent could name the author.

Audience reactions to the story may be gauged from the following comments, selected from amongst those recorded by our interviewers in the field:

FAVORABLE

"*It would be fascinating and exciting.*"—28-year-old girl clerk in cut-rate drug store, Chicago.

"*Yes, I started to read the book.*"—41-year-old man copywriter for advertising agency, Boston.

"*Read the book and liked it.*"—30-year-old brewery worker, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

"*I'd like to see what they do with this delightful book.*"—45-year-old woman. Social worker, Cleveland.

"*Different kind of South American picture than is usual.*"—28-year-old keymaker for locksmith, New York City.

"*I know a fellow who read it and said it was good.*"—23-year-old jeweler, New Brunswick, N. J.

"*Sounds like it would be colorful in Venezuela.*"—21-year-old secretary in War Department, Birmingham, Ala.

"*I've read the book and it's delightful. I am sure I'd see that.*"—21-year-old son of deceased carpenter, Denver.

"*I'd go to see it because it was a good book.*"—21-year-old wife of clothing manufacturer, Chicago.

UNFAVORABLE

"*Here's one of them hoop-skirt pictures! No indeed!*"—30-year-old electrical appliance salesman, Connellsville, Pa.

"*I don't go for pictures about other days than our own, and I like them about people in our own country.*"—53-year-old ash collector, Pittsburgh.

"*I don't like the title and the story doesn't seem to be good.*" —28-year-old woman, office cleaner, Chicago.

"*I don't like foreign pictures—too hard to understand.*"—16-year-old daughter of farmer, Dardanelle, Ark.

"*I don't go in for them kind of pictures—those old-time pictures in the '80s.*"—24-year-old clerk, Lowell, Mass.

The 15-page synopsis submitted by RKO was too anecdotal to suggest any substantial story line. We therefore took the liberty of spotlighting the romance between the Boston girl and the Venezuelan general, to the complete exclusion of their little boy. Any number of other treatments are possible, some of which might be found to possess greater audience appeal.

In developing other treatments, however, it may be difficult to avoid offending the susceptibilities of South Americans—if one treats the element of a New England girl in 19th Century Caracas in almost the only way it can be treated, namely, as a satire on the be-medalled and generally ornate Venezuelan Spanish society.

The most encouraging fact brought to light by the test was that all those who had read the book were anxious to see it filmed. This factor should cause an increasing market for the picture in the months to come. As of today, however, since fewer than one per cent have read the book, this factor is not decisive.

Princeton, February 5, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 145

THE HISTORY OF MR. POLLY

BACKGROUND

On January 8 it was reported that RKO had purchased the H. G. Wells novel THE HISTORY OF MR. POLLY (Published 1909). One week later the INSTITUTE received instructions to test the audience appeal of this property*.

AUDIENCE APPEAL

The INSTITUTE has conducted three nation-wide checks on MR. POLLY—two without cast, using different synopses, one with Charles Laughton, using the stronger of the two synopses.

The results of these tests reveal that:

1. THE HISTORY OF MR. POLLY, as a story for motion pictures, lies on the borderline between Second and Third Class, with a range of 46 per cent to 53 per cent.

2. The story is relatively strong with the older age-groups, the better educated and the upper income-groups. With the great mass of ticket-buyers—poor and young—it is definitely weak. As we have shown in so many other instances, this pattern seldom makes for box-office strength.

3. The English setting emerges as a definite handicap so far as the less sophisticated majority are concerned. (c. f. PYGMALION etc.)

4. The *title* appears to militate against the property's audience appeal. We find that a sizable proportion of the less educated segment of the ticket-buying public seem to know of only one meaning for the word "history": a dull school subject, without promise of entertainment.

While we have not conducted any special test on the value of the title as an isolated factor, the volume of spontaneous criticism is such as to suggest that, whatever value may repose in the title as an old best-seller, is more than counterbalanced by the keep-away implicit in the word "history". A change of title, or at least a test of alternative titles, is strongly indicated.

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* From time to time the INSTITUTE has advocated the policy of testing first and buying afterwards. This sequence of events seems particularly feasible when a period of thirty years has already elapsed without another studio rushing into competition for the property.

5. Hitherto we have always encountered resistance to Mr. Laughton in a comedy role. As reported in connection with PICKWICK PAPERS, the majority of theatergoers have obstinately persisted in associating Laughton with his more sinister roles—the HUNCHBACK, CAPTAIN BLY, PENGALLON, etc. We now find that a considerable part of this opposition has been broken down by Laughton's performance in IT STARTED WITH EVE.

6. In the NINTH (January) AUDIT OF MARQUEE VALUES Laughton emerged fifty-third on the whole list and twentieth of male actors. His contour parallels that of the Wells story: he appeals primarily to the elderly, the prosperous and the well-educated.

The following comments have been selected from those recorded verbatim by our investigators in the field:

FAVORABLE

"Because I've read the story and it was funny and spicy."—25-year-old girl, university stenographer in Rochester, N. Y.

"It's something unusual. An interesting character."—24-year-old man, bookkeeper in New York City.

"I would like to see how my husband would act if I acted that way."—43-year-old wife of printing salesman in Pittsburgh.

"He mispronounces words. I do that myself."—40-year-old street cleaner in Brooklyn.

"I know people like that. It should be funny to watch."—24-year-old ordinance foreman in Farrell, Pa.

"Because his wife nags him it would be funny."—15-year-old daughter of farmer in rural Iowa.

"I've read the story—like it and like Charles Laughton very much."—23-year-old law student, son of carpenter in Denver, Col.

"It's everything gone wrong. Laughton is good for a funny part like that."—18-year-old chipper in navy yard in New York City.

"I like the original story and I think Laughton admirably cast."—38-year-old owner of grocery market in Chicago.

"Because of Charles Laughton. He is tops in comedy."—31-year-old waiter in Rochester, N. Y.

"Absolutely wouldn't miss it. .Laughton has a repeat performance of 'Ruggles of Red Gap' in this."—24-year-old real estate salesman in Philadelphia.

"He is good in that type of part. I saw him in a similar one once."—20-year-old aviation student in Pasco, Wash.

"I like Laughton in comedy."—25-year-old accountant in New York City.

UNFAVORABLE

"English and slow moving and dry."—29-year-old woman runs family news agency in Lansford, Pa.

"Very dry. Nagging wife and such don't interest me."—27-year-old engineer for electrical ice plant in Philadelphia.

"I don't like that old people type of picture."—16-year-old daughter of foreman for contractor in Lexington, Ky.

"The people are too old in it."—18-year-old daughter of grocer in Vancouver, Washington.

"I don't like pictures that have an English background."—22-year-old caster in steel plant in Chicago.

"It's too old fashioned."—13-year-old son of cobbler in Lowell, Mass.

"I don't care about a history of something that is past. I like modern things."—35-year-old tobacco salesman in Russellville, Ark.

"Too much drabness", "seems like a drab show" "I think this would be depressing".

"I like the true-to-life situations there, but I just don't see Laughton in that part."—26-year-old woman. Home manager—supervisor in the Farm Security Administration in Indiana.

"I don't like the name of it."—19-year-old farm hand in Clarendon, Texas.

"It hasn't got no title that explains what the show's about. The title says history and the description says its comedy."—18-year-old pin-boy at bowling alley in Chicago.

"Polly is a girl's name and a man shouldn't go by that name and the fact that the title says history doesn't appeal to me . . "—22-year-old waiter in Boston.

"Don't like the sound of the title. It sounds misleading. I depend more on the title of a picture than newspaper reviews of it, and this doesn't sound so good."—21-year-old student, son of insurance broker in San Francisco, Calif.

"It don't sound good to me. I guess the fact that it says history doesn't sound good."—16-year-old daughter of knitter in Indianapolis, Ind.

Princeton, March 17, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 146

CHALLENGE TO THE NIGHT

Tests recently completed by the INSTITUTE reveal that CHALLENGE TO THE NIGHT, the novel by Cecil Lewis published in London five years ago and recently purchased by RKO, belongs in the Third Class. In our nation-wide survey the property received a vote of 45 per cent.

The story, as synopsized by the RKO Story Department, is as follows:

> A young English diplomat on leave in Tahiti meets a woman of his own age marooned there with a half mad German husband and falls desperately in love with her. He refuses to heed the warnings of friends and accepts the husband's invitation to visit his wife and daughter and himself on the remote and lonely island where they have made their home for eight years.
>
> Little by little the Englishman wakes to the fact that he has walked into a fantastic trap the German has made for the murder of his wife . . . . a murder for which he will be exonerated on his plea that he murdered in jealous rage when he discovered she was having an affair with the Englishman under his own roof.
>
> The Englishman takes the one desperate chance offered for escape for himself, the wife and the child . . . . in a small sailing canoe, only to find that the escape has been anticipated by the husband and the canoe has been sabotaged to make their death certain . . . . and accidental. A friend who has come to his rescue from Tahiti overtakes the canoe just as it capsizes . . . . but the woman is lost. Together, they return to the Island to arrest the husband, but even that vengeance is denied when his bungalow catches fire and he is burned alive in the inferno.

CHALLENGE TO THE NIGHT emerges below average with every segment of the ticket-buying public, but is least week with persons in the twelve-to-seventeen age group, with males and with the lowest income group.

CHALLENGE TO THE NIGHT possesses one substantial asset. In a separate poll the *title* was run by itself against the titles of five other RKO properties, and it easily out-pulled them all. The question asked was this: "Here are just the titles of six forthcoming pictures. Judging from the titles alone, which one would you be most likely to see?" The voting was as follows:

TITLE TEST

CHALLENGE TO THE NIGHT	25%
HAPPY ENDING	18%
CHEYENNE	18%
FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE	15%
A LIFT FOR A MILLION*	12%
CALL OF THE CARIOCA	12%

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*This was the only one of these six properties which did well in its story test. (See REPORT 141)

The following reactions to the story are typical:

FAVORABLE

"I like German men pitted against Americans or English. It generally shows the nature of the two."—22-year-old woman—tile plant laborer in Zanesville, Ohio.

"Sounds exciting. I would like to see someone murder all the Germans."—12-year-old son of stockyard-manager in Kansas City.

"I like to see pictures where one person double-crosses the other."—15-year-old son of farmer in New Brunswick, N. J.

"I'd like to find out how he gets out of the trap."—18-year-old daughter of a bartender in Detroit.

"It sounds different than the usual run of thing. It's got a different angle."—37-year-old wife of garage owner in Boston.

UNFAVORABLE

"It sounds morbid and degrading."—22-year-old son of doctor in New York City.

"Though I like diplomatic pictures and stories about foreign parts, this just seems too artificial—too much the same old thing."—28-year-old woman Chamber of Commerce secretary in Connellsville, Pa.

"I don't care for English diplomats nor half mad Germans to begin with, then the plot is sort of weird."—35-year-old wife of post office clerk in Lexington, Ky.

"All of these stories about Tahiti are half mad."—21-year-old typist in New York City.

"Another artificial one. It's too exaggerated."—44-year-old truck dispatcher in Philadelphia.

"It's fake"—28-year-old electrician's helper in Washington.

"More propaganda."—38-year-old wife of chiropodist in Chicago.

"Those dramatic things are too deep."—22-year-old soda clerk in St. Paul.

Princeton, March 19, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 147

MICHELE MORGAN

On October 16, 1940 Michele Morgan arrived in the United States. Two weeks later we found that less than two per cent of all American moviegoers had heard of Miss Morgan. A majority guessed that MICHELE must be the name of a man.

In a nation-wide poll conducted during the seven days ending February 17, 1942 we found that the number able to identify the name MICHELE MORGAN had risen to twenty-seven per cent. By contrast, only two per cent were able to identify the name SIGNE HASSO.*

	Able To Identify	
	Nov. 1940 —	Feb. 1941
	%	%
Orson Welles	73	80
Michele Morgan	**2**	**27**
Signe Hasso	2	2

This table demonstrates that the exploitation campaign for MICHELE MORGAN has already attained tangible results. Now that this actress has begun to emerge from anonymity it will be interesting to see whether she can be built into a ticket-seller.

It will be remembered that twelve months ago we conducted a photograph test of six RKO contract actresses. In this test, without names, Miss Morgan emerged sixth, below Comingore, Warwick, Fox, Hasso and Haal. Respondents described her face as "sophisticated" "like Garbo" "like Dietrich". A glance at the Garbo and Dietrich charts will show that such comparisons are not entirely flattering.

***This fact suggests that it is still not too late to change Miss Hasso's name.**

Princeton, March 18, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 148

BATTLE STATIONS or PAY TO LEARN

BACKGROUND

On January fifth it was announced that RKO had purchased BATTLE STATIONS, a story by Borden Chase which had twice appeared in the SATURDAY EVENING POST. Ten days later the INSTITUTE received instructions to determine the audience acceptance value of the story; on January 26th we received instructions as to cast; and on February 2nd we received a list of seventeen titles for testing.

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE VALUE

1. BATTLE STATIONS has been tested three times—twice without cast using two different synopses, and once with Pat O'Brien using the stronger of the two synopses. In its two tests without cast BATTLE STATIONS received votes of 51 per cent and 57 per cent, with the latter figure probably the more significant. Thus the story emerges as high Second Class.

2. The "contour" (i. e. the pattern of acceptance by age, income, sex and other groups) of BATTLE STATIONS parallels the contour of most war stories which do not include a love angle: exceptionally strong with males, with ticket-buyers under twenty years old, and with the low income groups, but below average with females and the upper income groups. It is a happy circumstance that this contour also parallels the contour of Pat O'Brien's marquee value.

3. In exploiting BATTLE STATIONS it is important to slant the advertising and the publicity primarily at *men* and *boys*.

4. Although the INSTITUTE is in no way qualified to offer advice on distribution, nevertheless we would suggest, with all diffidence, that it might be a good policy to open BATTLE STATIONS at the Rivoli or some other theater where low-income patrons predominate. An opening at the Music Hall or some other high-class house might damage the picture's reputation. The reasons for this are:

(A) BATTLE STATIONS is strong with the poor, relatively weak with the rich.

(B) BATTLE STATIONS is stronger with *males,* and we normally find more males among the patrons of low-income-group houses than among the patrons of high-class houses.

5. Tests conducted soon after Pearl Harbor indicated a rising market for war stories (See REPORT 141). Some of the comments on BATTLE STATIONS indicate that this rise may be beginning to level off. "I'm about ready for pictures that have nothing to do with the war."

6. Nevertheless, there are some theatergoers to whom a war story of this sort has taken on new significance. Where formerly they would have regarded the subject matter as Class B melodrama which could have little interest for them, they now look upon it as relating to affairs about which they want to know. "Normally not—but under present conditions maybe" said a fifty-year-old man school teacher in New York City. The story gets an extra impetus from those who now have brothers and sweethearts (an ever increasing brigade) in the Navy. There is some evidence to suggest that, while the younger women seem to enjoy projecting their brothers or their sweethearts into the shoes of the hero, the older women are distressed by the reminder that their sons are in mortal peril.

7. During 1940 Pat O'Brien gained 12 points in the Audit of Marquee Values, reaching a peak while Knute Rockne was in release. During the last year he has made only one picture, compared with a previous rate of five or six per annum; as a result he is now suffering from *lack of circulation,* and he has declined 13 points since November, 1940. Perhaps the most valuable advice we could offer to Mr. O'Brien would be:

(A) Make more pictures, because you need the circulation.

(B) Do not make love in your pictures, because your male fans don't like it.

As of January, 1942, O'Brien ranked twenty-second among actors and thirty-eighth among all personalities.

8. In a separate series of four nation-wide polls (three trial tests and a final run-off) we tested the pulling power of sixteen titles, taking care to see that such closely similar titles as Through The U-Boats and U-Boat Killers did not appear on the same ballot to split each other's vote.

The winning title was Navy Comes Through, and if we give it the value of 100, then the other titles score as follows:

Navy Comes Through	100
Navy Spirit	68
Defenders Of The Sea	55
Transport To London	49
U-Boat Killers	30
Atlantic Fleet	30
Full Speed Ahead	28
Thru The U-Boats	27
Shoot On Sight	27
Navy Gunners	24
Gunner Joe	23
Periscope Ho	17
Battle Stations	15
Surface Sharks	12
Avenging Guns	12
Action Stations	10

The following comments are typical of thousands recorded by our investigators:

FAVORABLE

"Normally not—but under present conditions maybe."—50-year-old man, high school teacher in New York City.

"I like the navy and the players."—13-year-old daughter of rooming house keeper in Detroit.

"I will be there soon myself."—19-year-old farm laborer in Pasco, Washington.

"Yes I would because it's a navy picture and my boy friend is in the navy."—20-year-old girl, cashier for insurance company in Chicago.

"Because it is something that is happening now. I'd like to know what it is all about."—20-year-old daughter of truck driver in Yonkers.

"Sure sounds interesting about sailors and fighting the Nazis."—16-year-old son of steam fitter in Yonkers.

"I have to have action to keep me awake in shows."—38-year-old truck driver in Chicago.

"Good story—will teach a good lesson. Should be popular."—54-year-old store proprietor in Cleveland.

"That was in SATURDAY EVENING POST. *It's up to the minute—gives an idea of what goes on behind the scenes."*—39-year-old wife of magazine sales promoter in Denver.

"I like to see war pictures—I like to see battles on the ocean. It's thrilling to see boats sink."—17-year-old son of clerk in jewelry store in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

"It's thrilling and has fast action. Such things are happening now."—22-year-old moving van driver in Farrel, Pa.

"Yes that's good. — Anything we see where the Nazis are blown up appeals to us. This present war is interesting to see."—19-year-old son of furniture merchant in Indianapolis, Ind.

"I'd like to see the submarines. I'm waiting for my uniform now to get into the service—so of course this would interest me."—33-year-old tool maker in Chicago.

"*I'd see that even if the cast were bad because I'm interested in this war.*"—22-year-old waiter in New York City.

"*I'd be interested in this because it is a war picture and I'd like to know how to sink one of the subs myself.*"—29-year-old sand machine operator in foundry in Chicago.

"*Most people like the idea of someone who wasn't a hero and all of a sudden becomes one.*"—17-year-old daughter of pharmacist in Rochester.

"*I like to see a guy single-handed sink a sub.*"—14-year-old son of plumber in Boston.

"*It shows fighting spirit—courage of Americans.*"—30-year-old janitor in town hall in Lansford, Pa.

"*I like a hero story when they are down and come back on top.*"—24-year-old wife of dry cleaner in Russellville, Ark.

"*Yes—because after the American gunner shoots his best friend, instead of letting it get him down, he makes a comeback.*"—14-year-old son of laborer in Jacksonville, Ill.

UNFAVORABLE

"*I'm about ready for pictures that have nothing to do with the war.*"—28-year-old wife of commercial artist in Philadelphia.

"*Leaves too many people upset about their family who are in danger.*"—34-year-old wife of bank cashier in Russellville, Ark.

"*No. I don't think it would be genuine either as to ocean, battle scene, or submarine. If real shots it would be my choice.*"—45-year-old man, school teacher in Pasco, Wash.

"*My impression would be that the action would have to be faked.*"—41-year-old newspaper rewrite man in Chicago.

"*I'd rather see a love story. This kind is child like.*"—20-year-old waitress in Russellville, Ark.

"*There's no love in it.*"—15-year-old daughter of embalmer in Kansas City.

"*No love interest in it.*"—15-year-old daughter of delivery man in Detroit.

"*I hear enough of that in the newspapers.*"—58-year-old wife of fruit clerk in Denver.

"*I like Pat O'Brien but am tired of war pictures. I want to see something to take my mind off the war.*"—55-year-old janitor in apartment house in St. Josephs, Mo.

"*This I think would be more on the propaganda side. I'd like to see newsreel shows as they are.*"—50-year-old marine engineer on lake steamer in Chicago.

"*I feel it would be propaganda pure and simple.*"—33-year-old army officer formerly construction engineer in Wilkes Barre, Pa.

"*Cagney and O'Brien did it too often.*"—17-year-old son of wholesale salesman in New York City.

"*Too much excitement.*"—16-year-old daughter of advertising manager for Brewery in New Orleans. (This comment is very common among women theatergoers.)

"*Anti-Nazi talk and it bores me.*"—21-year-old wife of day laborer in Danbury, Conn.

"*Too damn melodramatic.*"—20-year-old son of lawyer in Brooklyn.

"*I don't particularly care for sea battle stories where there's no love interest.*"—20-year-old daughter of dress shop owner in Jacksonville, Ill.

Princeton, March 23, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 149

A SONG OF BERNADETTE

BACKGROUND

On September 9, 1941, it was reported in the trade press that the International Artists unit had purchased Franz Werfel's forthcoming novel, A SONG OF BERNADETTE.

On September 15 the INSTITUTE wrote to RKO, suggesting a test of this property, and on January 26 a synopsis arrived in Princeton. Ten days later the INSTITUTE mailed an interim report on the basis of early returns. We are now in a position to make a final estimate of the value of this story.

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE VALUE

A SONG OF BERNADETTE emerges in the third class with a vote of 46 per cent. The story shows real strength with ticket-buyers in the high income brackets, but it is below average with every other segment of the motion picture public.

Analysis of results shows that A SONG OF BERNADETTE is considerably stronger with Roman Catholics than with the rest of the population, but even with Catholics it is by no means phenomenal.*

Scrutiny of the comments recorded by our interviewers reveals that a significant proportion of ticket-buyers do not regard the religious theme of this story as acceptable *entertainment*. Even Catholics have admitted during interviews that they would be bored by it.

In addition many Protestants volunteered that they would resent the picture as Papistic propaganda.

In general A SONG OF BERNADETTE appears to be considered too heavy and depressing to achieve great box-office success.

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* While we have no definite data on the subject, we would estimate that Roman Catholics account for approximately one-fifth of the box-office dollar.

The following comments are typical:

FAVORABLE

"*Good inspirational picture.*"—28-year-old bookkeeper in Jackson, Mississippi.

"*It shows that there are still a lot of big people left. Might help to restore your faith in humanity.*"—32-year-old wife of salesman in New York.

"*I'm taught by the nuns, and I appreciate them.*"—12-year-old daughter of a laborer in Pittsburgh.

"*Because I have often thought I would like to see Lourdes Shrine.*"—48-year-old wife of chain-store owner in Kansas City.

"*I think it spurs you on and is good for your morale in general.*"—18-year-old girl apprentice printer in Chicago.

"*Yes—because I'm a Catholic and it should be interesting to me.*"—33-year-old woman school teacher in New Brunswick.

"*Yes—because the Pope proclaims her a saint.*"—17-year-old daughter of a policeman in Boston.

"*Because of the religious angle, I'd see this. Anything connected with the Church is good.*"—23-year-old office clerk in Yonkers.

"*I've always been interested in that shrine, so I think it would be very interesting.*"—22-year-old wife of veterinarian, rural Iowa.

"*It's essential—it's spiritual.*"—30-year-old medical instrument salesman, New York City.

"*Yes. It's different—something you'd not see every day.*"—23-year-old woman grade school teacher, Denver.

"*I'd like to see her because of her courage in nursing the soldier.*"—20-year-old office girl on newspaper, Chicago.

"*A mystical picture — would be a change.*"—30-year-old baker in Boston.

"*Sounds like the kind of picture some producer wants to make real good.*"—31-year-old wife of insurance broker in Queens.

UNFAVORABLE

"We hear all about it in school. It wouldn't interest me because I'm fed up with it."—15-year-old boy, son of grocery office worker, Indianapolis. (This boy was a Catholic.)

"I'd feel blue all evening."—16-year-old daughter of freight conductor, Lincoln, Nebraska.

"It's one of these old 'sobby' stories."—28-year-old music store manager, Meridian, Mississippi.

"Ruins picture when they try to put religion in."—34-year-old woman secretary to school board in New Orleans.

"On account of its religious angle—no special faith should be picked out in the movies."—41-year-old building inspector in Denver.

"Movies have exploited Catholic faith far above Protestant faith and Protestant faith is not portrayed in a sincere manner."—47-year-old special railroad agent in Chicago.

"It's idealistic mush."—21-year old, (Catholic), office worker in Chicago.

"I don't care for it. I'm a Catholic. I don't think that should be made into a picture."—19-year-old apprentice machinist in Vancouver, Washington.

"I don't like so much pain and suffering in a show."—28-year-old wife of service station manager, Philadelphia.

"I don't like shows about sick people."—14-year-old son of steel plant laborer, rural Iowa.

"Too much foreign in it."—20-year-old cafe waiter, Detroit.

"I don't like to go to a movie about religion."—29-year-old barber, Cleveland.

"It would be too much serious stuff."—18-year-old cow tester, rural Iowa.

"I don't go for this—it's more like history."—16-year-old girl on relief, New York City.

"No, I don't like anything about religion—it gripes me."—17-year-old son of mechanical engineer in Yonkers.

"Pain and suffering. Too deep and serious. I'd stay away."—17-year-old office boy in Boston.

"I'm not interested in Catholic stories."—23-year-old office clerk in Pittsburgh.

"No relaxation here—not entertaining."—31-year-old stenographer in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

"I go to pictures to relax, not to cry."—30-year-old accountant in electric appliance company in Queens.

"I don't like holy pictures."—12-year-old son of janitor, Pittsburgh.

"I'd rather see pictures of what happens in this country—more the funny type."—14-year-old daughter of fur shop clerk in Danbury, Connecticut.

Princeton, March 23, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 151

FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE II

BACKGROUND

FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE opened on Broadway in November 1937. It played one hundred and twenty-five performances, being withdrawn in March 1938 and sent on tour. Chicago did not like it, and the remainder of the tour was cancelled.

On January 9, 1942 the INSTITUTE reported that, when tested in two nation-wide surveys, FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE had emerged low in the Third Class.

On January 29 we received a revised treatment of FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE under the title TWICE UPON A TIME, with instructions to test it with Pat O'Brien, Maureen O'Hara and Donald Crisp.

On February 25 we received Emmet Lavery's screenplay with instructions to test it once more, using the same cast.

Our tests have now been completed.

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE VALUE

In our previous study we found that only a minority of the ticket-buying public reacted favorably to FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE in its original form. The adverse reaction to this story on the part of the majority was found to be due to three basic factors:

1. Many ticket-buyers complained that the story was "too fantastic." The miraculous levitation of the night-club apparently placed too much strain upon the ordinary imagination. *"I don't like them imagination shows."*

2. We detected the usual resistance to the introduction of the religious element in entertainment, both on the part of the frankly irreligious and also on the part of the religious. —*"No sense involving God in a movie, I'll take my religion in church."*

3. Ticket-buyers did not react favorably to the mixture of religion and humor. *"I don't like the mixture of priests and night-clubs. They don't seem to go together."*

According to Mr. Lavery's preamble, the screenplay which is the subject of the present report "transposes an intellectual satire into a charming folk comedy while still preserving the basic point of view of FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE." Specifically, the locale is shifted from a night-club in Edinburgh to a pub in County Wicklow, where—in Mr. Lavery's opinion—"the audience will believe the story because the characters believe it." As he says, the story is now more rural than religious, more Irish than ecclesiastical. It is a realistic fairy tale.

The results of our latest survey indicate that the three original obstacles to the play's audience acceptance are still present. Moreover, we have no evidence to support the theory that American moviegoers like folk comedy. Scrutiny of the comments recorded by our interviewers in this case reveals a reaction which closely resembles the reaction to THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER.

FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE, in its present form, is stronger with Roman Catholics than with other ticket-buyers, but it must be remembered that Catholics do not account for more than one fifth of the box-office dollar. Even with Catholics, the vote is below average.

When tested with Pat O'Brien, Maureen O'Hara and Donald Crisp, FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE, in its latest form, again emerged very low. We encountered more than the usual volume of articulate opposition to the cast.

While the story itself is stronger with *females* than with *males*, Pat O'Brien's following is predominantly *male*. Here you have an unfortunate combination. Male ticket-buyers do not like the story and female ticket-buyers do not like the cast.

The evidence which we have accumulated suggests that Pat O'Brien should concentrate on pictures which do not require love scenes. Our tests have shown that he is strongest in such vehicles as THE FIGHTING 69TH, KNUTE ROCKNE, LOU GEHRIG, BATTLE STATIONS and BOMBARDIER.

If, in spite of these findings, it is decided to proceed with the production of this picture, it is important that the two titles, TWICE UPON A TIME and FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE, should be tested against each other.

Princeton, April 11, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

GONE WITH THE WIND III

FRENCH CANADA

The results of a survey conducted by the INSTITUTE during March 1942 reveal that, whereas relatively fewer French-Canadians than English-Canadians have seen GONE WITH THE WIND up to now, the potential market for the third play-off is *relatively* larger with the French than with the rest of Canada.

The following table shows the comparative situations in the United States, Canada and French-speaking Canada:

	% of Total Population Who Have Seen G. W. T. W %	*% of Total Population Included in Potential for Third Play-off* %
United States	35	9.5
Canada	25	8.7
French Canada	14	11.3

While these figures seem to indicate that the potential is great among the French-Canadians, it must be remembered that they number only 3,400,000 throughout the Dominion. We thus arrive at a French potential of 384,000 for the third play-off, subject to the usual provisos as to number of bookings, playing time, prices and exploitation.

We find that the French potential is concentrated—even more than in the case of English-speaking Canada or the United States—in the lower income-groups, who tend to frequent rental houses and to pay low admission prices. Among wealthy French Canadians the want-to-see vote is actually lower than among wealthy Americans.

We find that the French go to the movies even less frequently than the rest of Canada:

	% of Adult Population Who Go to Movies Once a Month or More %
United States	74
Canada	55
French Canada	45

Princeton, April 14, 1942

Report No. 152

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 153

JEANETTE MACDONALD

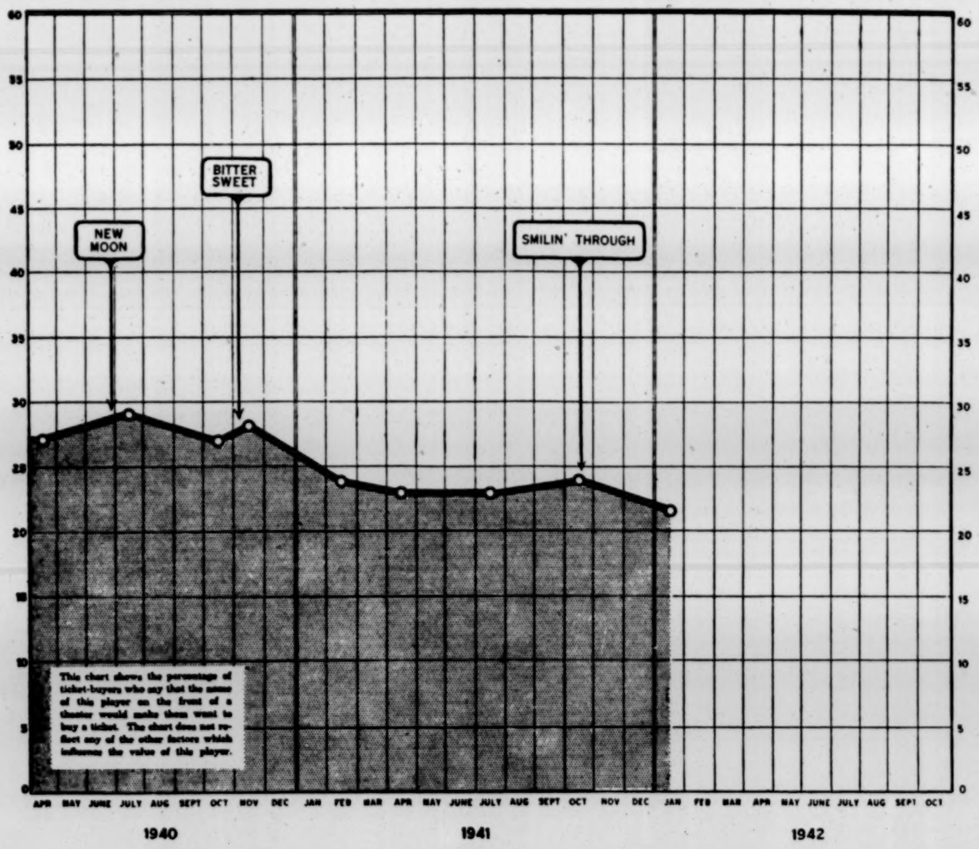
BACKGROUND

On March 30 the INSTITUTE was instructed to determine the following:

1. Most recent box-office standing of Jeanette MacDonald as an individual.
2. Most recent box-office standing of Allan Jones as an individual.
3. Whether the public is more interested in seeing Jeanette MacDonald without Nelson Eddy.
4. Whether the public is interested in seeing Jeanette MacDonald and Allan Jones teamed together.
5. Whether or not the public prefers Jeanette MacDonald in a singing role.

(1) Box-office standing of Jeanette MacDonald

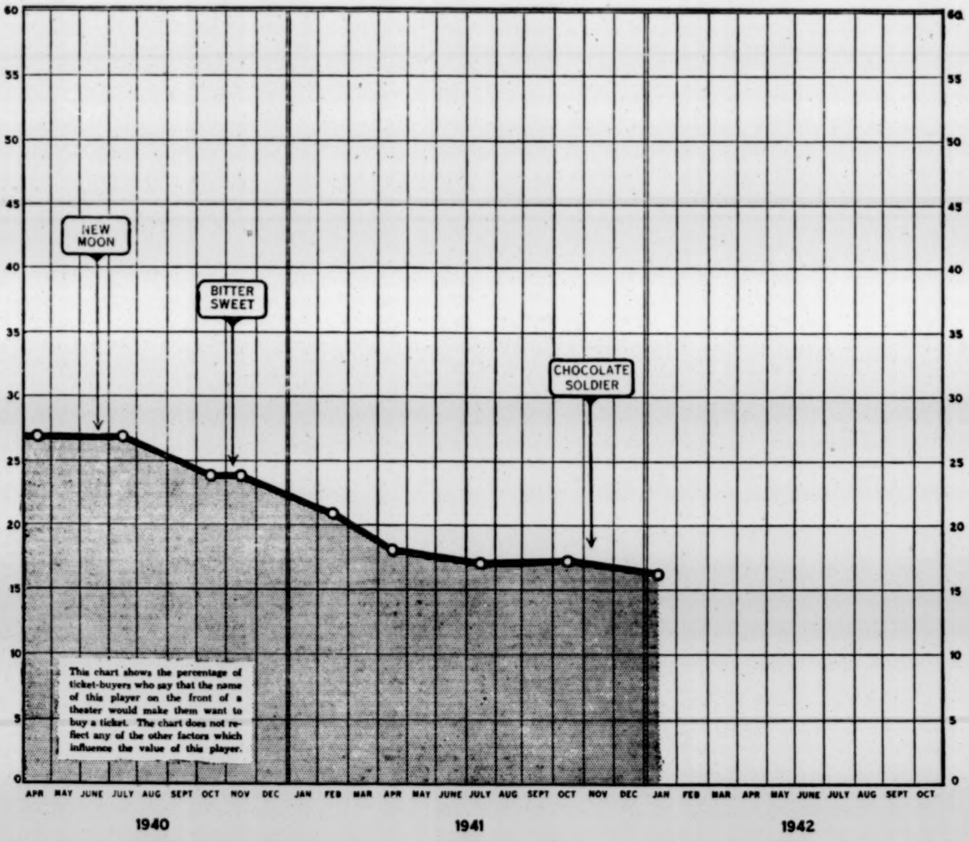
In April 1937 the INSTITUTE conducted its first Audit of Marquee Values, and Jeanette MacDonald then emerged as the ninth biggest ticket-seller. In January 1942 she had fallen to thirty-sixth place, with her following concentrated in the older age-groups. She is stronger in towns under 10,000 than in larger communities. Her following is much greater among females than among males.



This chart shows the percentage of ticket-buyers who say that the name of this player on the front of a theater would make them want to buy a ticket. The chart does not reflect any of the other factors which influence the value of this player.

After BITTER SWEET Jeanette MacDonald did not appear in a picture for twelve months. While the average decline for personalities who remain off the screen for this length of time is 33 per cent, MacDonald lost only 10.5 per cent of her marquee value. This fact suggests that, while she may be on the way out, her staying-power is such that she will continue to sell tickets for many years to come. Our findings indicate that, given enough pictures, there is no reason why she should not recapture some of the ground lost during the last two or three years.

(2) Box-office standing of Nelson Eddy



This chart shows the percentage of ticket-buyers who say that the name of this player on the front of a theater would make them want to buy a ticket. The chart does not reflect any of the other factors which influence the value of this player.

Nelson Eddy has been losing marquee value more rapidly than Jeanette MacDonald. In our first Audit, for April 1937, Eddy emerged twenty-second, whereas today he is not among the first fifty. He has not been making enough pictures. He is that rare phenomenon—an actor whose appeal is greatest with middle-aged females. Like MacDonald, he is stronger in small towns than in large cities.

The "pattern" of their following is a function not only of their personalities but also of the type of picture in which they have appeared. Romantic musicals are found to be most popular with females, with the older age-groups, and in small towns.

(3) Box-office standing of Allan Jones

We have no detailed information on the box-office standing of Allan Jones, since he has never been included in the CONTINUING AUDIT. Such data as we do have on him indicates that he does not now rank among the first two hundred.

Jones has been seen in seven pictures during the last four years. The following is a record of the box-office performance of these pictures as reflected in the Classification of the RKO Theater Department:

			RKO Rating %
Feb.	'38	EVERYBODY SING with Garland & Brice	79
Sept.	'39	HONEYMOON IN BALI with MacMurray & Carroll	97
Dec.	'39	THE GREAT VICTOR HERBERT with Mary Martin	103
Oct.	'40	BOYS FROM SYRACUSE with Raye & Lane	86
Nov.	'40	ONE NIGHT IN THE TROPICS with Nancy Kelly	67
March	'41	HARD-BOILED CANARY with Suzanne Foster	B
1942		TRUE TO THE ARMY with Judy Canova	B

It may be that this record proves nothing as to the marquee value of Allan Jones, but at least it demonstrates that he must be suffering from lack of circulation. In our survey we found that only 71 per cent of all ticket-buyers could remember ever having seen him on the screen.

(4) Whether the public is more interested in seeing Jeanette MacDonald without Nelson Eddy

In the course of this study we showed ticket-buyers the synopsis of a typical romantic-musical, cast with Jeanette MacDonald. They were then told that the two players under consideration for the male lead were Nelson Eddy and Allan Jones, and were asked which of these two actors would most make them want to see the picture. The voting was as follows:

	%
Nelson Eddy	63
Allan Jones	31
Neither	6
	100

The vote for Eddy was greatest among those who had reacted favorably to the rest of the set-up, i.e., among those who liked Jeanette MacDonald and liked romantic musicals. The reasons advanced most frequently for selecting him were as follows:

1. *Eddy and MacDonald make a good team.*
2. *Eddy sings "nice".*
3. *Never seen Jones.*
4. *Better singer and actor than Jones.*
5. *Just the type for the part.*
6. *One of my favorites, etc.*

The reasons advanced most frequently for selecting Allan Jones were as follows:

1. *Don't like Eddy.*
2. *Younger, more manly, more romantic.*
3. *Better singer and actor.*
4. *Tired of Eddy.*
5. *Just the type for the part.*

Those who dislike Eddy complain that he is "very stiff," that "he looks like a frozen corpse," that he "isn't masculine enough," that he is "not a he-man," and that he is "too old."

The fact that the first four reasons advanced for selecting Allan Jones were purely negative—i.e., dislike of Eddy—suggests that Allan Jones is even weaker than the figures would indicate. It may be assumed that few if any of the ticket-buyers who voted for Jones as the lesser of two evils would go to see the picture if alternative entertainment were available.

There is some degree of overlapping between the followers of Eddy and the followers of MacDonald—59 per cent of the persons who vote for Eddy also voting for MacDonald.*

***This duplication factor is exceeded in many instances. For example, 84 per cent of the ticket-buyers who vote for Jack Benny also vote for Bob Hope; and 78 per cent of the ticket-buyers who vote for Laughton also vote for Muni. There must always be duplication between the marquee values of *any* two stars. One of the lowest duplication factors on record is that between Wallace Beery and Greer Garson, but even in this case 22 per cent of the persons who vote for Garson also vote for Beery.**

(3) Box-office standing of Allan Jones

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1942	TRUE TO THE ARMY with Judy Canova	B

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(4) Whether the public is more interested in seeing Jeanette MacDonald without Nelson Eddy

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	%
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Allan Jones	31
Neither	6
	100

Summary

1. Jeanette MacDonald today ranks fifteenth of all actresses and thirty-sixth of actors and actresses combined. Her main weakness is that she is not strong with the younger age-groups. She appeals most to persons living in small towns. She needs more pictures.

2. The public would rather see Jeanette MacDonald with Nelson Eddy than with Allan Jones.

3. Jeanette MacDonald is a bigger ticket-seller than Nelson Eddy, who has been falling more rapidly. Today he stands nineteen places lower than she. There is a 59 per cent duplication between their followers. Whether it would be economic to use both stars in one picture must depend upon the price of Eddy and the trading advantages inherent in offering exhibitors two stars instead of one.

Princeton, April 25, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 154

BOMBARDIER

BACKGROUND

On November 11, 1941 it was reported that Reeves Espy would make BOMBARDIER. On March 18, 1942 the INSTITUTE received instructions to determine the audience acceptance value of the screenplay. On April 11 we reported that BOMBARDIER had emerged high in the First Class.

AUDIENCE ACCEPTANCE

In a nation wide survey completed on April 10, a synopsis of the William Wister Haines screenplay (without cast) was exposed to a representative cross-section of ticket-buyers. The story received a vote of 69 per cent. Only nine properties tested by the INSTITUTE have received more votes.

As was to be expected, BOMBARDIER's greatest strength is found to be with ticket-buyers under 19 years of age, but it is also above average with the older age-groups. From male ticket-buyers it received one of the highest votes ever recorded, and even with females it was slightly above average.

BOMBARDIER received an especially high vote with the low income groups, but was slightly below average with the prosperous. This fact is rather an advantage than a disadvantage.

As we reported in the case of BATTLE STATIONS, the "contour" of combat pictures—i. e., the pattern of their acceptance by age, income, sex, and other groups—parallels the contour of Pat O'Brien's marquee value. This fact makes O'Brien a happy selection for the leading role in BOMBARDIER.

As in the case of BATTLE STATIONS, it is important to slant the advertising and the publicity for BOMBARDIER primarily at men and boys. It might be a good policy to open BOMBARDIER at a theater, or theaters, where low-income patrons predominate; we normally expect to find proportionately more males among the patrons of a low income-group house than among the patrons of, say, the Music Hall.

Scrutiny of the comments recorded by our interviewers shows that the strength of BOMBARDIER depends to a large extent on the intense hunger of the American public for a glimpse of the American war effort.

It is interesting to find that, with one or two notable exceptions, war stories set in *foreign* backgrounds are not doing nearly as well in our tests as war stories set in an *American* background. In this connection it is relevant to report the results of a recent survey conducted by the INSTITUTE, where we asked ticket-buyers the following question: "Most new movies of the present day have something to do with the war or the army and navy. If you were going to the movies tonight, which would you be most likely to see? A war-time movie where the story takes place in war-time United States, Nazi-occupied France, or war-time England?"

The voting was as follows:

	War-Time United States	*Nazi-Occupied France*	*War-Time England*	*No Opinion*
	%	%	%	%
TOTAL	46	26	26	2
MALE	44	35	21	0
FEMALE	48	17	31	4
INCOME GROUPS				
Prosperous	43	19	31	7
Upper-Middle	44	29	26	1
Middle	46	25	26	3
Poor	54	24	22	0
AGE GROUPS				
12 - 17	55	21	24	0
18 - 30	45	28	26	1
31 up	42	23	28	7
SIZE OF CITY				
Under 10,000	49	29	12	0
10,000 - 100,000	49	28	20	3
100,000 - 500,000	48	24	27	1
Over 500,000	41	23	32	4

These figures indicate that, other things being equal, the public would rather see "war-time movies" where the story takes place in the United States rather than in France or England.

Our findings on BOMBARDIER demonstrate that it would be a mistake to exploit this picture merely as an aviation thriller. Ticket-buyers are beginning to feel that they have seen enough "airplane pictures" in recent months. In this case emphasis must also be laid on the picture's connection with the American war effort, if maximum box-office results are to be achieved.

Our interviewers encountered some stumbling over the pronunciation of the title, but we have no specific information on this point.

FAVORABLE COMMENTS

"*It's about Americans.*"—18-year-old son of a housekeeper in Omaha, Neb.

"*We should know about the war and what we are doing in it.*"—30-year-old janitor in San Francisco, California.

"*It should be exciting and really give a good idea of how such things work.*"—28-year-old wife of university instructor in San Francisco.

"*I'd like to see a good picture on how they train American pilots and see them avenge Pearl Harbor.*"—21-year-old mine laborer in Lansford, Pa.

"*It's American. It's a true story. It would give the American people an idea of what we can do. We've been in the dark long enough.*"—40-year-old service lineman for electric company, Boston, Mass.

"*We, the little people, need to know all we can about our present preparations.*"—19-year-old girl, assistant to a stenographer in Lafayette, Ala.

"*I like patriotic pictures* now."—16-year-old daughter of a clothing manufacturer in Chicago.

"*We need good men.*"—56-year-old taxi cab driver in New York City.

"*Just to keep more in touch with the war business than anything else.*"—26-year-old wife of short order cook in Philadelphia.

"*I'm interested in what's going on in the war* on our side."—19-year-old building laborer in Detroit.

"*A great deal to do with the present time and I like to see people fighting red tape.*"—23-year-old wife of baker in Cleveland.

"*I have a friend in a Bombardier school in the army.*"—27-year-old manager of coal business in Zanesville, Ohio.

"*First as entertainment. Second, might get a few pointers.*"—38-year-old abstractor in forest service in Russellville, Ark.

"*I think our boys are the best shots there are. That would be interesting.*"—31-year-old cigar salesman in Syracuse, N. Y.

"*Deals with* us *and our problems.*"—25-year-old stenographer in War Dept., Memphis, Tenn.

"*I think I'd like that guy Davis, and I think I'd like to see Fred MacMurray in his part.*"—34-year-old man; buyer of men's clothing in Lexington, Ky.

UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS

"*This is too much of a war picture. Be too realistic.*"—31-year-old woman teacher in Lafayette, Ala.

"*I'm not so keen on airplane stories.*"—19-year-old daughter of artist in New York City.

"*I don't like to see bombing pictures. It won't be a picture very soon.*"—15-year-old daughter of painter in New York City.

"*I've a boy in it. I'm afraid it would make me feel sad.*"—72-year-old wife of retired train dispatcher in Indianapolis, Ind.

"*Sounds like the same old hero stuff.*"—21-year-old wife of machine operator in New Brunswick, N. J.
"*Sounds a little too flag-waverish.*"—23-year-old student, son of major in Air Corps, New Brunswick, N. J.

"*No sir. I wouldn't care for it. I'm so sick of war pictures, I could die.*"—33-year-old wife of auto parts salesman in Lexington, Ky.

"*Most of this is a lot of bunk. Pseudo-patriotism. Instead of a good plot or script, they are made up of some movie man's idea of a thriller.*"—38-year-old car washing equipment manufacturer, Oakland, California.

Princeton, April 27, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 155

COLBERT VS. STANWYCK FOR CHINA SKY

On April 22 the Institute received instructions to determine the relative pulling power of Claudette Colbert and Barbara Stanwyck in the role of Dr. Sara Durand in China Sky.

The procedure employed in making this test was to show a synopsis of the Pearl Buck story to a representative cross-section of ticket-buyers and then to ask them which one of the two actresses—Colbert or Stanwyck—would most make them want to see the picture.

In the Institute's Continuing Audit for January 1942, Barbara Stanwyck and Claudette Colbert emerged within two percentage points of each other. But it might be supposed that when tested for a specific role, one would emerge substantially higher than the other. As it turns out, however, there is no significant difference between the two actresses in this case, and we conclude that whichever can be secured on the most favorable terms is the best one for China Sky.

While Colbert beats Stanwyck with the upper income-groups and in the larger cities, Stanwyck is victorious with every other segment of the ticket-buying public. Over-all, Stanwyck wins by 2 per cent—which is less than the statistical deviation due to size of sample. The voting was as follows:

	Stanwyck	*Colbert*	*Neither*
	%	%	%
Total	48	46	6
Male	48	46	6
Female	48	46	6
By Income			
$60 up	47	50	3
$35 - $60	47	48	5
$25 - $35	49	45	6
Under $25	51	42	7

	Stanywck %	*Colbert* %	*Neither* %
BY SIZE OF CITY			
Over 500,000	38	53	9
100,000 - 500,000	46	49	5
10,000 - 100,000	55	40	5
Under 10,000	58	38	4
BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE			
Habitual moviegoers (Once a week and up)	49	47	4
Occasional moviegoers (Less than once a week)	46	45	9
BY REACTION TO STORY			
Those who had reacted favorably to the story	50	47	3
Those who had reacted *un*favorably to the story	47	41	12

Princeton, May 6, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 156

THE CRIME OF LAURA SARELLE

In a nation-wide test recently completed by the INSTITUTE Joseph Shearing's novel, THE CRIME OF LAURA SARELLE, received a vote of 45 per cent, thus qualifying for inclusion in the Third Class.

The reactions of persons interviewed in our poll reveal that many of them have come to prefer mystery stories treated in lighter vein. In its present form the majority of movie-goers complain that THE CRIME OF LAURA SARELLE is "unpleasant," "gruesome," "too melancholy," "gloomy," "depressing."

In this connection it is interesting to note that numerous respondents found a resemblance between THE CRIME OF LAURA SARELLE and LADIES IN RETIREMENT—a recent Columbia picture which, in spite of some critical acclaim, was not a box-office success.

Our past findings have shown that the demand for crime pictures is greater with male theatergoers than with females. In this case, however, the fact that the story centers about the misfortunes of a woman alienates the interest of male theatergoers, pulling the male vote down to the level of the female vote.

Other possible explanations for the negative result on THE CRIME OF LAURA SARELLE are the English background and the period setting. In general, we have found that—other things being equal—both of these factors are likely to reduce the audience acceptance of a property of this sort. In addition, we encountered an unfavorable reaction to the use of insanity as a cardinal factor in the plot; it appears that insanity is too grim a subject for most entertainment-seekers.

The following comments have been selected as typical of those recorded by our interviewers in the field:

FAVORABLE COMMENTS

> *"This sort of gets you interested to see what happens. I like pictures about English estates like* REBECCA."—52-year-old housemaid, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

> *"I like the romance of girl and cruelty of brother. It sounds exciting."*—16-year-old daughter of skilled cement-finisher, Columbus, Ohio.

"I like scary ones, and this one would have a lot of good acting in it."—19-year-old daughter of farmer, Russellville, Arkansas.

"Bloodthirsty."—18-year-old man, wholesale jewlery clerk, New York, New York.

"I like to see somebody get killed."—29-year-old factory guard, Bronx, New York.

"I like a good mystery—the spooky kind."—14-year-old son of bookkeeper, Oakland, California.

"I like juicy murders." — 23-year-old mechanic, Lincoln, Nebraska.

"Boy! This is thrilling."—21-year-old female laundry worker, Lincoln, Nebraska.

"Maybe I am a little sadistic."—27-year-old army corporal, former commercial artist, Denver, Colorado.

"That would keep you in suspense wondering how it would turn out."—22-year-old housemaid in rural Iowa.

"I enjoyed LADIES IN RETIREMENT, *and this sounds like it. It's a vivid tragedy like* LADIES IN RETIREMENT."—22-year-old cashier in night-club, Chicago, Illinois.

"Oh that would be good. It's spooky."—14-year-old son of truck driver, Lexington, Kentucky.

"It sounds nice and gruesome."—20-year-old daughter of shoe salesman, Cincinnati, Ohio.

"Mmmmm, this is good! Sounds like it'd be nice and spooky. Yeah, I'd like to see that."—17-year-old daughter of clipping bureau clerk, San Francisco, California.

"I always did want to see how a nobleman goes nuts."—32-year-old bus driver, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS

"Oh, I don't like those spooky mysteries. The only kind I like are sophisticated murder comedies like THE THIN MAN."—31-year-old night man in garage, St. Joseph, Missouri.

"I do like detective pictures, but I like the ones better that are happier *right now."*—32-year-old grocery clerk in rural Iowa.

"The title doesn't sound very good. It sounds rather gruesome to me."—32-year-old commercial artist, Indianapolis, Indiana.

"I can think of more pleasant things."—50-year-old creamery operator, Lincoln, Nebraska.

"I don't like the setting—too gloomy—don't care for this kind of picture."—16-year-old son of railroad clerk, Lansford, Pennsylvania.

"My mother won't let me go to weird or spooky movies."—14-year-old son of power plant laborer, Lansford, Pennsylvania.

"Too gloomy and depressing."—28-year-old 2nd Lt. in Army, Omaha, Nebraska.

"Sounds pretty dull. Reminds me of picture LADIES IN RETIREMENT." — 24-year-old boss window cleaner, Bronx, New York.

"I'm sick of English pictures on moors, etc. Too melancholy."—27-year-old bookkeeper, Memphis, Tennessee.

"A gloomy English estate—a century ago. Certainly doesn't sound very entertaining."—26-year-old woman physician, Indianapolis, Indiana.

"Good heavens no! These old gloomy English affairs."—39-year-old railroad mail clerk, Denver, Colorado.

"I don't care for the English type of production."—19-year-old shipping clerk, San Francisco, California.

"I don't want to see anything that happened a century ago."—48-year-old wife of dentist, Bronx, New York.

"Oh those crimes. We've had so many crime pictures! Besides it happened 100 years ago."—48-year-old newspaper man in San Francisco, California.

"If it was modern and up-to-date, yes—not a century ago."—47-year-old outdoor signs salesman, New York, New York.

"I'd hate to see any picture where anybody's mind would crack up."—42-year-old wife of garage mechanic, Columbus, Ohio.

"I don't care for that because she goes crazy."—18-year-old daughter of mechanic, San Francisco, California.

"A thousand times no!!"—27-year-old stenographer, Denver, Colorado.

"Don't like pictures about lords and noblemen."—23-year-old precision instrument worker, Brooklyn, New York.

Princeton, June 4, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 157

COMIC STRIPS

In December 1940 the Institute asked a representative cross-section of movie-goers: "Which of the newspaper comic strips do you think would make a good movie?"

At that time Blondie emerged with the most votes followed by L'il Abner and Dick Tracy (See Report LXXVII).

In a nation-wide poll just completed, we exposed a roster of the twenty comic strips which had received the most votes in the earlier study and asked ticket-buyers which they would especially enjoy seeing made into a movie. The two comic strips which emerged at the top of the list have already been the subjects of motion pictures. Next in order came Terry And The Pirates. Voting was as follows:

MAY 1942

1. Blondie
2. L'il Abner
3. Terry and the Pirates
4. Dick Tracy
5. Joe Palooka
6. Smilin' Jack
7. Bringing up Father
8. Superman
9. Tillie the Toiler
10. Jane Arden
11. Gasoline Alley
12. Flash Gordon
13. Mutt and Jeff
14. Orphan Annie
15. Dixie Dugan
16. Winnie Winkle
17. Boots and her Buddies
18. Freckles
19. Wash Tubbs
20. Abbie and Slats

Terry And The Pirates was the comic strip to receive most votes *in proportion to the number of its readers among movie-goers.*

It must be emphasized that the value of this study is limited. We have measured only the *ready-made* market for the comic strips concerned. We have not used our normal synopsis procedure to determine their audience acceptance value. But we would welcome an opportunity to do so in the case of any comic strip for which you have treatments available.

Princeton, May 14, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 158

GRAND CANYON

On January 13, 1942 the New York TIMES reported that RKO had scheduled GRAND CANYON for production. Three months later the INSTITUTE was instructed to determine the audience acceptance value of this property.

Tests based on the story alone, and also with Richard Dix, were conducted during the last week in April and the first week in May. Further tests are now in progress using Jack Holt as well as Richard Dix, and referring to the fact that the picture will be in technicolor.

When tested without cast and with no reference to technicolor, GRAND CANYON emerged in the rare first class, with one of the highest votes ever registered by a story with a Western background.

More favorable comments were recorded on the scenic possibilities than on any other single element in the property.

More than one respondent noticed a resemblance between GRAND CANYON and BOOM TOWN.

When a story which has been tested without cast is subsequently tested *with* cast, the addition of the star's name normally increases the percentage of ticket-buyers who say they would want to see the picture. However, this increase does not take place when a story with high original audience acceptance is tested with a cast of limited marquee value. In such instances, the minor cast seems to take the picture out of the A brackets in the minds of theatergoers.

Thus, when GRAND CANYON was tested with Richard Dix, the property actually received a lower vote than when tested without reference to cast. The original audience acceptance value of the story is so high as to place it in the First Class. But Richard Dix does not now rank among the first hundred and fifty ticket sellers. In addition, the consensus of persons interviewed in our poll was that Dix is "too old."

When the vote registered by GRAND CANYON (with Richard Dix) is translated into terms of the want-to-see vote on the Index of Publicity Penetration, we find that the picture emerges ten points below the average for A pictures.

In a separate study we measured the relative pulling power of the two titles GRAND CANYON and COLORADO. There was only one percentage point difference in the votes they received. GRAND CANYON was found to attract the young and the poor to a greater extent, while COLORADO exhibited a tendency to attract the older and wealthier ticket-buyers—probably because it suggested a more solid and historical type of picture.

The following comments are typical of those recorded by our interviewers:

FAVORABLE COMMENTS

"It gets away from the humdrum reality of life and that's my idea of a good movie."—24-year-old ticket agent for railroad, Kansas City, Kansas.

'It's relaxing. I like to see shots of the Grand Canyon."—20-year-old son of liquor dealer, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

"I have been there. It is beautiful country."—21-year-old sailor, former tobacco warehouse worker in Brooklyn, New York.

"It's a love story and with pretty scenery."—12-year-old daughter of manager of International Harvester Co., Austin, Texas.

"The plot isn't too good, but the setting should be good."—34-year-old insurance agent, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

"Action picture and I'd like to see pictures of the Grand Canyon."—15-year-old son of trust officer in bank, Kansas City, Kansas.

"Good scenery — would enjoy seeing that as I like to travel."—36-year-old woman knitter, Reading, Pennsylvania.

"*It's drama and pretty colorings. It don't happen every day.*"—17-year-old shipping clerk, Rochester, New York.

"*Sort of gives you an idea of what the West is like.*"—18-year-old son of welder, Rochester, New York.

"*The story doesn't interest me, but it couldn't help but show the country there and I'd like that.*"—30-year-old wife of bank teller, San Francisco, California.

"*There's everything in it—excitement and love.*"—37-year-old wife of janitor, Boston, Massachusetts.

"*This is friendship and sacrifice. It is eternal. It is heroic to give your life for something you believe in.*"—37-year-old bellhop, Brooklyn, New York.

"*I'd like to see the outcome when there's just chance for one to escape.*" — 25-year-old wife of insurance salesman, Rochester, New York.

"*I've been to Colorado. I think it would be exciting, though Dix has gotten a little old.*"—34-year-old trained nurse, New York, New York.

"*I like the thrill of it. It sort of makes your hair stand on end.*" — 50-year-old life insurance saleslady, St. Joseph, Missouri.

"*I like those* outstanding *cowboy pictures.*"—17-year-old wood carver, Knoxville, Tennessee.

"*I like it because it sounds very much like Tracy and Gable.*"—38-year-old oil salesman, Lexington, Kentucky.

"*I'd like this—on the order of one with Tracy and Gable—all those are good.*"—61-year-old widow, mother of office worker, Birmingham, Alabama.

UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS

"No. Richard Dix is an old man now."—16-year-old son of furniture salesman, San Francisco, California.

"Dix is fifty—he ought to give up."—44-year-old part owner of cocktail bar, San Francisco, California.

"That's for men alone. It would be too much of that engineering stuff."—29-year-old wife of signal corps mechanic, Lexington, Kentucky.

"It happens in all these serials you see. Come next week and see what happens." — 16-year-old girl, curtain cutter, Bronx, New York.

"Sounds too much like the LONE RANGER. *I don't like westerns."* — 39-year-old wife of statistician, Rochester, New York.

"Cowboy stories bore hell out of me."—31-year-old government administrator, New York, New York.

Princeton, June 4, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 159

THE FALLEN SPARROW

On March 20, 1942 it was announced that RKO had purchased THE FALLEN SPARROW, an unpublished mystery novel by Dorothy B. Hughes. Three weeks later, the INSTITUTE was instructed to determine the audience acceptance value of this property. It was therefore exposed to a representative cross-section of theatergoers throughout the country during the third week in May—immediately prior to its publication by Duell, Sloan & Pearce.

THE FALLEN SPARROW—without reference to cast, treatment, or direction—received a vote of 64 per cent, thus qualifying for inclusion in the rare First Class. The story is found to be far above average with all age groups, and is especially strong with that adolescent segment of the audience where frequency of attendance reaches it peak. From them it received a vote of 87 per cent—one of the highest ever recorded by the INSTITUTE for any story in any audience-group.

THE FALLEN SPARROW is average with female theatergoers and far above average with males. It is above average with theatergoers at all income levels, in all sizes of community, and with both occasional and habitual theatergoers.

It is interesting to note that, as a general type, THE FALLEN SPARROW somewhat resembles SEVENTY-TWO HOURS BY TRAIN—an RKO property tested by the INSTITUTE last December and again in January. (See REPORT 134) But there are differences between the two stories and among these differences we find three possible explanations for the greater appeal of THE FALLEN SPARROW.

For one thing, the man hunted by the Gestapo is an American rather than a German and, as such, he commands greater sympathy. Secondly, THE FALLEN SPARROW possesses more intrigue and less bloody action—hence its more favorable acceptance with females and elderly theatergoers. Finally, in the case of THE FALLEN SPARROW we encountered little or no opposition on the grounds that the story contains propaganda. This fact may be a function of time rather than of story.

THE FALLEN SPARROW was tested without cast but some theatergoers volunteered the names of Pidgeon and Bogart as candidates for the leading role, and Alfred Hitchcock was nominated several times for director. In view of the story's high audience acceptance value, it would seem that the kind of investment implied by such names might be justified.

The following comments are typical of those recorded by our investigators:

FAVORABLE COMMENTS

"Because it's an American *war prisoner getting away from the Nazis."*—12-year-old son of house painter, Boston.

"Sounds exciting — got something to it about American *war."*—16-year-old son of Navy Lt., formerly travelling salesman, New York.

"I'd like to see a movie about an American *war prisoner."*—37-year-old law stenographer, New York.

"The suspense holds interest—one man vs. the Nazis."—37-year-old house furnishing salesman, Queens, New York.

"Lots of action in it. Suspense too—his being spied upon all the time."—24-year-old engineer, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

"It has action and is a little different, I guess. Makes a fool of the Nazis." — 18-year-old clerk in milk company, Yonkers, New York.

"This is an action thriller. If Bogart were in it, I'd surely go."—28-year-old aviation instructor, Yonkers, New York.

"I like action thrillers. It would have a lot of suspense. It sounds like Hitchcock."—13-year-old son of restaurant manager, New York.

"Sounds like a new angle on the anti-Nazi pictures."—26-year-old dancing instructor, Queens, New York.

"It's about the Nazis and Germans. I hate them. I'd like to have one for about five minutes—I'd fix him."—28-year-old garage operator, Tewksbury, Massachusetts.

UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS

"I'm so sick of pictures about the Nazis that I don't know whether I'm coming or going."—24-year-old beauty operator, Queens, New York.

"I've seen so many along this line lately."—19-year-old daughter of rancher, Birmingham, Alabama.

"This buried treasure business is a fake. Propaganda stuff."—27-year-old plane repairer, Oakland, California.

"Nothing in it interests me. Too, too fictitious."—31-year-old secretary on school faculty, New York.

"It's fantastic—too much like MAN HUNT."—26-year-old shoe salesman, Rochester, New York.

"It sounds very much strained and highly improbable."—40-year-old woman school teacher, Russellville, Arkansas.

"It's just like any other run-of-the-mill picture—trash."—26-year-old luncheonette owner, Queens, New York.

Princeton, June 2, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 160

BUNDLES FOR FREEDOM

On April 10 the Institute was instructed to determine the audience acceptance value of Bundles For Freedom, a seventy-one page original by Milton Holmes. On April 28 we telegraphed that the property had emerged in Third Class with a vote of 39 per cent.

Subsequent analysis of the comments, however, revealed that a considerable share of the adverse reaction to the story could be traced to two elements in our synopsis. These unpopular elements were: The fact that Joe pretended his father was in a *Nazi concentration camp* (which many theatergoers interpreted as meaning the property would be an anti-Nazi film) and the fact that Joe himself was *Greek.*

While both these elements were present in the story itself, they did not seem sufficiently dominant in the plot-structure to be permitted to govern the over-all reaction of a substantial portion of the persons interviewed. Accordingly we re-tested Bundles For Freedom with a revised synopsis which omitted those elements.

However, the revision did not substantially alter the result. When tested without cast, Bundles For Freedom again emerged with an audience acceptance value which placed it in the Third Class.

This is a surprising result for a story which seems to contain several ingredients of box-office success—action, romance, topical interest, a patriotic theme, and publication in a magazine. Yet the fact that two separate tests (based on synopses in which the emphasis was considerably altered) both registered a low audience acceptance value, suggests audience resistance to some fundamental element in the story idea.

It is difficult to identify this element positively. But we find a clue in the comments: *They reflect a widespread reaction to the effect that the basic situation is in bad taste.* To quote a few: "I don't like the idea of robbing a war-time benefit ball." "This story is in poor taste. The whole subject is really too important to be made fun of." "I don't like the idea of a hold-up for a cause like this."

The basic difference between Bundles For Freedom and certain other patriotic gangster stories of recent months is that the chief protagonist in Bundles For Freedom deliberately directs his activities towards robbing a war charity—an act which, movie-goers seem to feel, belongs in a class with the unspeakable crime of robbing the poor-box in a church.

Thus, instead of capitalizing on patriotic sentiment, BUNDLES FOR FREEDOM seems to outrage that sentiment. Whether or not the story can be revised so as to eliminate this objectionable element, we are not qualified to say.

When tested with Cary Grant, BUNDLES FOR FREEDOM still did not demonstrate any marked strength. If the results of the story-test with cast are translated into terms of the want-to-see vote on the INDEX OF PUBLICITY PENETRATION, BUNDLES FOR FREEDOM would register about 73 per cent. By contrast, SUSPICION obtained a want-to-see vote of 82 per cent on the INDEX.

The "contour" of Milton Holmes' story (i. e., its audience acceptance value by age, sex, income and size of community) is almost exactly the opposite of Cary Grant's contour. Grant is now stronger with females, while BUNDLES FOR FREEDOM is considerably stronger with males. BUNDLES FOR FREEDOM appeals more to the very low income groups than to the sophisticated elements which particularly appreciate Grant. Rarely has the INSTITUTE encountered so much volunteered opposition to the casting of a star.

One factor not fully reflected in our tests may operate to increase somewhat the acceptance value of BUNDLES FOR FREEDOM even in its present form. Our final test was conducted within a few days after the publication of the story in Cosmopolitan, before it had a chance to accumulate its ultimate share of readers. We have found that publication of a story in a magazine tends to increase its audience acceptance value as a picture, among the readers of the magazine. However, while magazine publication is undoubtedly a plus factor, it is not likely to be a big enough plus to alter this property's prospects importantly.

In a separate poll, the INSTITUTE exposed the title BUNDLES FOR FREEDOM, without synopsis or cast, to a cross-section of ticket-buyers, asking them to guess the subject of the picture. Results were as follows:

What the Title BUNDLES FOR FREEDOM
Suggests to Theatergoers.

	%
War	31
Freedom (an ideal to fight for)	13
Timely	13
Patriotic	13
A charity for soldiers	5
Propaganda	5
All others	20
	100%

Princeton, June 9, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 162

CASTING CHINA SKY

(See also Reports 114, 141, 155)

On May 19, the INSTITUTE received instructions to determine the relative pulling power of Claudette Colbert, Luise Rainer and Barbara Stanwyck for the role of Dr. Sara Durand in CHINA SKY; and the relative pulling power of Paul Muni and Randolph Scott for the role of Dr. Gray Thomison in the same production. Also, the tests were to include a study of the relative pulling power of the various co-starring *teams* which might be formed from this group of five players.

First, respondents were shown a short synopsis of CHINA SKY without cast. Next, they were handed a card on which were printed the names of the three actresses. The question was as follows: "These actresses are being considered for the part of the woman doctor. Which one would most make you want to see CHINA SKY?" Voting was as follows:

	% of Vote
BARBARA STANWYCK	35
CLAUDETTE COLBERT	34
LUISE RAINER	31

Reference to Report 155 will show that the original cast-tests for CHINA SKY, using the names of Claudette Colbert and Barbara Stanwyck only, resulted in a near-tie between the two actresses.

This tie remains. But Luise Rainer, who has not been seen on the screen for four years, emerges in a distinctly challenging position to the other two. In view of the relatively high marquee value of Claudette Colbert and Barbara Stanwyck, as reported in the INSTITUTE'S CONTINUING AUDIT for April, 1942, this represents a remarkable interest among the theatergoing public in the selection of Luise Rainer for the role.

Analysis of our findings reveals that Luise Rainer holds a substantial lead for the role among ticket-buyers in the *older age-groups* and with the *prosperous*. They remember her particularly for her role in THE GOOD EARTH and hence are inclined to select her for the leading role in this production because of its Chinese locale. This, despite the fact that "Dr. Sara Durand" is not a Chinese character.

In many instances, respondents stated that Luise Rainer was their "favorite" in Pearl Buck stories.

In view of these facts, her inclusion in the cast of CHINA SKY, even in a supporting role as an Oriental, if not the feminine lead, should contribute materially to the eventual success of the production.

MUNI VERSUS SCOTT

The next step was to evaluate the relative box-office contributions of Paul Muni and Randolph Scott in the role of Dr. Thomison. The voting was as follows:

	% of Vote
PAUL MUNI	58
RANDOLPH SCOTT	42

Muni held a commanding lead in cities of 500,000 and over, and, as a matter of fact, dominated the voting in cities of all sizes excepting those under 10,000. In this group, Scott led by two percentage points. All four income-groups—prosperous, upper-middle, middle and poor—gave Muni a stronger vote than Scott.

Analysis by age-groups reveals that the 12-17 group is the only one which prefers Scott to Muni—an understandable result since Scott, in the main, has appeared in action pictures and westerns. Scrutiny of comments demonstrates that ticket-buyers have a strong tendency to link Scott with western roles and, for that reason, prefer Muni for this type of performance.

When the ballots are sorted by *teams*, results are as follows:

	% of Votes
RAINER and MUNI	26
STANWYCK and SCOTT	21
COLBERT and MUNI	18
COLBERT and SCOTT	15
STANWYCK and MUNI	14
RAINER and SCOTT	6

In the light of this table it is interesting to recall a paragraph in the INSTITUTE's Report 114 on CHINA SKY, which read:

> "In a series of polls conducted earlier this year we found that of all Muni's previous pictures the one most favorably remembered by the public was THE GOOD EARTH. We now find that teaming Muni with Rainer elicits a stream of comment along these lines: 'I saw THE GOOD EARTH *and they played so good together.*' THE GOOD EARTH was among the fourteen highest grossers of 1937."

The only competition that could be called competition was represented by the Stanwyck-Scott vote. The age-group breakdown shows a preference for the Stanwyck-Scott combination among ticket-buyers aged 12-17 and follows as a natural result of similar findings for Stanwyck and Scott in their individual polls, as set forth earlier in this report. However, the Rainer-Muni combination leads in all other age-group classifications.

Bear in mind that Luise Rainer has not been seen on the screen in four years and has not been teamed with Muni in five years. It follows naturally that theatergoers currently aged 12-17, in most cases, are too young to remember such performances even if they did see them.

The following comments have been selected from those recorded by our interviewers all over the United States. Note that in most cases the respondent's reasoning was positive rather than negative. The average movie-goer is found to be remarkably uncritical; his reactions are generally on the positive side of the wave-band; he is largely incapable of articulate disapproval.

LUISE RAINER

Previous Performances Admired

"I like her acting in other pictures of China Sky *kind, she should make a good doctor."*

"She was so wonderful in the Good Earth."

"Because I saw her in another Chinese picture. She's the best actress."

"I like her performances in other Oriental pictures."

"On account of Good Earth*—I like her."*

Just The Type For China Sky

"I think she fits in Pearl Buck's stories."

"She is the type according to the story. I read it in Colliers. Goes along no matter what happens—loves her work and her man. It takes someone with the character of Luise Rainer to play this."

"To me she's really typical of a doctor. More cool and collected."

"I think she is a more dramatic actress to fit that story."

"She's the only one with any sense here."

"It'd be a serious picture—she can play a serious part better."

"I think she's very good at that type of picture, dramatic—the other two is more comedy, I should think."

HAVE MISSED HER ON THE SCREEN

"I haven't seen her in a long time and I think she is a grand actress,"

"She's been gypped out of a lot of roles."

"Haven't seen her lately—she's a good actress."

"She made a swell picture once, give her another break."

BEST ACTRESS

"She's a better actress than the others. She's versatile."

"I think she's the best actress."

"I think she's a much finer actress than either of the others."

"She's a fine dramatic actress."

"She's most unaffected and definitely not 'actressy' looking."

MISCAST

"Rainer is too weepy."

"I don't care for Luise Rainer."

"She overacts."

"Luise Rainer is too skinny."

"Luise Rainer isn't too American."

CLAUDETTE COLBERT

PREVIOUS PERFORMANCES ADMIRED

"I always liked her. She can do very good. I saw her as a doctor before and she was good."

"She was good as a doctor in PRIVATE WORLDS.*"*

"I've seen her in one picture where she was a doctor and was very good."

JUST THE TYPE FOR CHINA SKY

"She'd be better than the others—a better actress for part of doctor."

"She seems more suited to the part."

"They're all good but she seems to fit the part."

"Think she'd play the doctor's part better."

"Think she's more the type."

"I think she looks more like a lady doctor."

BEST ACTRESS

"She's one of my favorites."

"Because I consider her one of the finest screen actresses there is."

"I think she's the best actress of the three. She seems to have more color."

MISCAST

"Too glamorous."

"Colbert takes comedy roles more than anything else and you can't feature her in anything else."

"Too shallow for the part."

BARBARA STANWYCK

PREVIOUS PERFORMANCES ADMIRED

*"She's done good work in other picturees—*MEET JOHN DOE; BALL OF FIRE.*"*

"I seen her in some other nurse picture and she took the part all right."

"Like her in any kind of picture, especially serious dramas and think she'd be good as the woman doctor."

JUST THE TYPE FOR CHINA SKY

"She's more the type for a doctor. She played a doctor part once before."

"She's the person for it."

"She could handle the role more efficiently—she's more versatile than the others and I don't even like her but I think she's capable just the same."

"I think she is more adapted to the part."

YOUNGER—MORE ATTRACTIVE

"I always admired her as an actress and she is one of my favorites—better than the rest—pep and vim."

"She has more sex appeal—after all that's the thing that counts in pictures."

"She's the prettiest and best love-maker."

"I think she's more up and coming—she's younger and a very good actress and very dramatic."

BEST ACTRESS

"She is the better actress of the three—more life to her."

"I like her better—she's a good actress."

"She is the best actress in the bunch."

"She's an intelligent actress with poise and ability. More realistic—lives her roles."

MISCAST

"I think the other two are more feminine than she."

"Barbara Stanwyck would never fit."

"Stanwyck is too intense."

"Barbara Stanwyck too flighty for a doctor."

PAUL MUNI

PREVIOUS PERFORMANCES ADMIRED

"Because he was good in THE GOOD EARTH.*"*

"I liked him as a doctor before in pictures. He's a good actor."

"I connect him with a lot better movies than Randolph Scott."

"I saw him in MADAM CURI AND LOUIS PASTEUR*—he is magnificent in anything connected with medicine."*

REMEMBER MUNI AND RAINER AS CO-STARS

"I think Muni would be good with Luise Rainer."

"I think Muni would fit with Luise Rainer. He fits in with China."

"Because Muni acts well with Luise Rainer."

"He'd play well opposite Luise Rainer."

"Believe he'd fit in better with Luise Rainer."

"I like to see him with Luise Rainer."

"Because he co-starred with her in GOOD EARTH.*"*

JUST THE TYPE FOR THE ROLE

"He's the doctor type—the other the playboy type."

"You can picture him in that role. Randolph Scott is more western type."

"I think he is more of the type for that part."

"Paul Muni would fit the part, I believe."

"Well, I believe he could take that type of part better. Randolph Scott makes me think of western stories."

"Anything in connection with China. He seems to fit into that type of picture better than Randolph Scott."

"He usually plays in this type. More honest, dramatic, realistic."

"He'd make a more convincing doctor. Has more of a professional manner."

"He's the type—he's had a lot of parts like that—don't like Randolph Scott in a part like that."

BETTER ACTOR

"He is a fine actor; the other one can't act—only grin."

"I think Paul Muni is the better actor."

"He's a better actor. Any stage actor or actress have it all over these Hollywood actors or actresses."

"One of the finest actors on the screen today."

"Randolph Scott can't act like Paul Muni can. Scott can't act. Good for secondary roles, no leads."

"He has more dramatic ability and makes a much better looking doctor."

MISCAST

"Paul Muni is too set for the part. The character must be able to make love as well as take off the doctor."

"Paul Muni is always the same—stereotyped."

"Don't like Paul Muni—never did like him. He's all right as serious-minded scientist, not in a dramatic story."

"Paul Muni is too old."

RANDOLPH SCOTT

PREVIOUS PERFORMANCES ADMIRED

"He always plays in good pictures—makes a better doctor than Paul Muni."

"He usually acts in exciting pictures and he'd be better in this type of picture."

"Nearly every picture he has had excitement. Muni is more educational and unexciting."

"I've seen more of his pictures."

"I think he did fine acting as a flyer, he knows his stuff."

"I think he has a lot of action in his picture."

"He's in action pictures—there must be action in it."

"He's a marvelous hero—he's swell in westerns and he'd be swell in that one, too."

"I saw him in SUNDOWN *with Gene Tierney and I liked him."*

YOUNGER—MORE THE AMERICAN TYPE

"He's younger and would fit the part of a more adventurous man. Paul Muni is more serious."

"A younger man would be more appealing in a love story."

"I like him because he is more American and more like our own people."

"He's younger—more clean-cut than Paul Muni."

"I just like him. He would make a good American doctor."

"More the doctor type and more the American type."

"He is so American."

"He's a clean American type."

BETTER ACTOR

"He's a better actor."

"I like him better—better actor."

"Well, I like him better—would like to see him get better parts."

"I just think he's a better actor, that's all."

JUST THE TYPE FOR THE ROLE

"He's a very good actor and would certainly fit the part."

"More suited for the part than sour-faced Paul Muni."

"He's better fitted for it—looks the part better."

"He seems to have a nicer doctor's personality."

"I just think he'd be better—Paul Muni is too deep."

Princeton, June 25, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

RE-ISSUES

The recent re-issue of GONE WITH THE WIND prompted the INSTITUTE to determine the relative demand for the re-issue of other box-office hits of past years.

In a nation-wide poll completed on May 30, we interviewed a representative cross-section of all ticket-buyers, showing them a list of the fifty top-grossing pictures of 1937, '38, '39 and '40, and asking them the following question:

> *"Are there any pictures on that list which you missed seeing but would like to see, or any that you would like to see again?"*

Inspection of the results shows that some pictures emerge higher than might be expected having regard to their original box-office performance—notably THE GOOD EARTH and GOODBYE MR. CHIPS. Conversely, some pictures emerge lower than might be expected having regard to their original success.

We find some considerable differences between the votes of men and women — differences which parallel the sex-composition of the original audience for the pictures concerned, as measured in previous INSTITUTE studies.

GONE WITH THE WIND received the biggest over-all vote. It is, therefore, unlikely that any of the other pictures on the list would gross as much as GONE WITH THE WIND has grossed in its third play-off.

Here are the twelve top pictures as ranked by males, by females, and by both sexes combined:

Total Rank		*Company*	*Year of Release*	*Rank With Males*	*Rank With Females*
1	GONE WITH THE WIND	Selznick	1940	1	2
2	THE GOOD EARTH	MGM	1937	6	3
3	REBECCA	Selznick	1940	22	1
	GOODBYE MR. CHIPS	MGM	1939	8	3
	LOST HORIZON	Columbia	1937	2	7
6	MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON	Columbia	1939	4	9
7	THE FIGHTING 69TH	Warners	1940	3	18
	STANLEY AND LIVINGSTON	T.C.F.	1939	6	11
9	GUNGA DIN	RKO	1939	4	26
10	GRAPES OF WRATH	T.C.F.	1940	15	18
	YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU	Columbia	1938	17	16
	CAPTAIN'S COURAGEOUS	MGM	1937	8	20

Report 163.

Princeton, June 25, 1942

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AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 164

JOHNNY GOES MARCHING ON

Studies recently completed by the INSTITUTE reveal that David Boehm's original story entitled JOHNNY GOES MARCHING ON* belongs in the Second Class. When exposed to a representative cross-section of ticket-buyers all over the United States, the story—without reference to cast—received a vote of 55 per cent.

Analysis of our findings indicated that if the story could be rewritten so as to subordinate Plato and Jean (the gangster and his girl), making Johnny the principal character, the audience acceptance value would be considerably increased. This indication was confirmed when we re-tested the story with a synopsis written from the angle of Johnny the soldier boy. The story then received a vote which qualified it for inclusion in the rare First Class.

At present the story's preoccupation with gangsterism limits its vote with females, with adults, with the prosperous and with infrequent ticket-buyers.

While no separate study has been made of the pulling power of the *title,* such spontaneous reaction as we were able to obtain was favorable. The title appears to be a strong one.

The following comments have been selected as typical of those recorded by our interviewers:

FAVORABLE

"*It tells something about the F. B. I.—How they get their man.*"—14-year-old son of lawyer in Boston.

"*It'd be different. It wouldn't be all about Nazis. It'll be about the* Americans."—28-year-old machinist for Railroad in Lowell, Massachusetts.

"*Because I haven't seen any pictures like that and I'd like to know what the war is about.*"—23-year-old soda dispenser in Kansas City.

"*This is sort of flag-waving—yet it's kind of cute.*"—32-year-old teacher in New Brunswick.

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*Purchased by RKO Radio Pictures, Inc., March, 1942.

"*I'll probably be in the army and* it might be me."—21-year-old son of sales manager in New York.

"*I guess we all like a little sentimental patriotism once in a while.*"—21-year-old wife of bookkeeper in Pittsburgh.

"*It has a lot of thrills—a little patriotism.*"—42-year-old maintenance man in Rochester, New York.

"*I like war pictures* now."—22-year-old wife of metal supervisor in Chicago.

"*It tells what the F. B. I. really does and what the country really means to the soldiers.*"—13-year-old daughter of engineer in St. Joseph, Missouri.

"*Yeah! That's a good picture—also good propaganda plot—fast action.*"—24-year-old owner of air raid precaution service in San Francisco.

"*Would have lots of tense moments.*"—30-year-old nurse in St. Louis, Missouri.

"*Yes. I like it because it's about American soldiers.* I don't like *gangsters though.*"—61-year-old widow in Birmingham.

"*There will be action in it. It shows the American spirit.*"—17-year-old mine laborer in Lansford.

"*I'd like to see where Johnny shows him where he is wrong.*"—16-year-old daughter of shipyard guard in New York City.

"*The ordinary gangster type—I don't like that, but this sabotage stuff is different.*"—44-year-old owner of radio shop in Washington, Iowa.

"*I'd like to see how a gangster could be turned into a real American.*" — 26-year-old commercial photographer in Bronx, New York.

UNFAVORABLE

"*I don't like to mix gangsters with anything to do with soldiers.*"—12-year-old daughter of doctor in Philadelphia.

"*I'm interested in the soldier boy.*"—57-year-old wife of blacksmith's helper in New York City.

"*But definitely No! War pictures are all right, even propaganda pictures, but they don't have to make a plain American soldier into a superman.*"—33-year-old wife of Engineer in San Francisco.

"*I'm not interested in that kind of stuff. I don't like gangster stuff.*"—75-year-old retired salesman in Boston.

"*Like army pictures but don't like anything to do with gangsters.*" — 26-year-old wife of manager of bungalows in Cleveland.

"*It sounds like a* quickly-put-together *story to cash in on the interest in the war.*"—36-year-old head bookkeeper in bank in Zanesville, Ohio.

"*To me this is just a plain propaganda picture and poor propaganda at that. Very little chance of it happening.*"—32-year old school teacher in Denver.

"*I don't like gangster pictures on general principles and that's also propaganda.*"—30-year-old secretary in the Bronx.

"*Sounds like cheap trash.*"—42-year-old building laborer in Detroit.

"*It isn't real or probable. I don't mind stories about the war* if they are true."—27-year-old woman-comptometer operator in San Francisco.

"*Definitely not. I think this is propaganda. I wouldn't give a damn for it.*"—52-year-old lumber manufacturer in Chicago.

"*That sounds like* hooey *to me.*"—28-year-old inspector at bomber plant in Omaha, Nebraska.

"*That would be very 'sappy.' I am tired of gangsters.*"—56-year-old widow of attorney in Yonkers, New York.

"*That sort of gangster business is a little overdone—a little too much of the same thing.*"—32-year-old ship fitter in Boston.

"*Title is good and suggests a story, but story is weak*—not *a* first class feature."—27-year-old stamper in dress factory in New York.

"*Don't go in for the gangster type pictures.* See so many pictures of gangster becoming a patriot all of a sudden."—21-year-old shipping clerk in New York City.

"*That's sort of cheap sounding.*"—61-year-old wife of service station owner in Sheffield, Alabama.

Princeton, July 6, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 165

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEN

One year ago we issued to our clients a report on the composition of the motion picture audience, showing the actual number of ticket-buyers at each age from five to eighty-five, and the number in each income-group. We have now completed a two year study of a parallel problem—the relative box-office contribution of *males* and *females*.

Because this problem is one of the most controversial in the motion picture industry, and because our conclusions differ markedly from the popular tradition,* we have taken the precaution of employing a battery of widely different research procedures to check and double-check our findings. In the course of this study we have covered a representative cross-section of 450,000 ticket-buyers and more than 300 different pictures; we have conducted nation-wide polls on general movie-going habits; at two different periods we have counted the males and females entering the doors of a scientifically selected sample of theaters all over the United States, on every day of the week and at every time of day.

We find that the sex composition of audiences varies widely according to the locality of the theater, the day of the week, the particular pictures playing at the theater, and many other factors. For example: in a neighborhood theater in New York the audience for TO BE OR NOT TO BE was 60 per cent female, while in a second-run downtown theater in Oakland, California, the audience for the same picture was only 45 per cent female. So it goes. Only when you assemble all these situations into one huge mosaic can you begin to form an over-all estimate of the sex composition of the film audience as it is today.

We find that, in spite of the absence of a large segment of the male population in military service, there are now as many males as females in the national film audience.

***Hitherto it has been widely believed that females account for at least 70 per cent of all tickets purchased. Some estimates gave the proportion of females as high as 80 per cent. For this proportion to be accurate, it would be necessary for the average woman to go to the movies *four times* as often as the average man!**

SIZE OF CITY

	Male	Female
	%	%
Over 100,000	51	49
Under 100,000	52	48

WEEKDAYS & WEEKENDS

	Male	Female
	%	%
Monday-Thursday	50	50
Friday, Saturday, Sunday	52	48

DOWNTOWN & NEIGHBORHOOD THEATERS

	Male	Female
	%	%
Downtown, First Run	51	49
Downtown, Second Run	54	46
Neighborhood	50	50

AGE-GROUPS

Males outnumber females in the younger age-groups. It is only among persons over thirty years of age (who account for less than 35 per cent of all tickets purchased) that we find a higher frequency of attendance by females than by males.

	Male	Female
	%	%
Ages under 18	56	44
18-30	52	48
30-50	49	51
Over 50	44	56
TOTAL	51	49

INCOME-GROUPS

In poor families, where the women tend to be preoccupied with child-care and other household duties, the men go to the movies more often than the women. Only in the upper income levels do the women go more often than the men. Most motion picture executives circulate mainly among people in the older age-groups and the upper income-groups. This may account for the fact that many of them are under the impression that females far outnumber males in other strata of the ticket-buying public.

SEX COMPOSITION FOR 114 PICTURES

While the percentage of males and females in the audience for any one picture is found to vary considerably from theater to theater, the INSTITUTE has been able to determine these percentages for the *total* audiences of 112 pictures.

Scrutiny of these percentages reveals at least as many box-office hits among pictures whose audience was predominantly *male* as among those whose audience was predominantly female. For example: SERGEANT YORK, A YANK IN THE RAF, FIGHTING 69TH, the HARDY series, the Bob Hope pictures (except ROAD TO SINGAPORE) and the Abbott and Costello pictures—all these were *men's* pictures, with audiences composed predominantly of men.

According to the most reliable indices available to the INSTITUTE, the average box-office performance of the fifty-five pictures whose audience was predominantly *male* was greater than the average box-office performance of the fifty-nine pictures whose audience was predominantly *female*.

	Female %	*Male* %
THE RETURN OF FRANK JAMES	31	69
ARIZONA	33	67
TWENTY MULE TEAM	34	66
FLIGHT COMMAND	34	66
BILLY THE KID	36	64
WESTERN UNION	37	63
THE MALTESE FALCON	38	62
HIGH SIERRA	38	62
VIRGINIA CITY	38	62
THE WESTERNER	38	62
THE FIGHTING 69TH	38	62
KNUTE ROCKNE	39	61
TOBACCO ROAD	39	61
DIVE BOMBER	40	60
KEEP 'EM FLYING	41	59
THE RAMPARTS WE WATCH	41	59
TYPHOON	41	59
GHOST BREAKERS	41	59
THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE	41	59
THEY DRIVE BY NIGHT	42	58
ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS	42	58
IN THE NAVY	43	57
I WANTED WINGS	43	57
A YANK IN THE R.A.F.	43	57
SEA HAWK	43	57
LOVE THY NEIGHBOR	43	57
YOU'LL FIND OUT	43	57
DR. EHRLICH'S MAGIC BULLET	44	56
SANTA FE TRAIL	44	56

	Female %	*Male* %
THIEF OF BAGDAD	44	56
BUCK PRIVATES	44	56
ALOMA OF THE SOUTH SEAS	44	56
HOLD THAT GHOST	44	56
SERGEANT YORK	44	56
NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH	45	55
BIRTH OF THE BLUES	45	55
CAUGHT IN THE DRAFT	46	54
BLOOD AND SAND	46	54
STRAWBERRY BLONDE	46	54
TORRID ZONE	46	54
THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME	46	54
NORTH WEST MOUNTED POLICE	47	53
CHAD HANNAH	47	53
THE GREAT DICTATOR	47	53
BUCK BENNY RIDES AGAIN	47	53
THAT NIGHT IN RIO	47	53
THEY MET IN BOMBAY	47	53
LIFE BEGINS FOR ANDY HARDY	48	52
DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE	48	52
MEN OF BOY'S TOWN	48	52
ANDY HARDY'S PRIVATE SECRETARY	48	52
ROAD TO ZANZIBAR	48	52
SHADOW OF THE THIN MAN	49	51
HONKY TONK	49	51
WEEKEND IN HAVANA	49	51
JOHNNY APOLLO	50	50
HERE COMES MR. JORDAN	50	50
CHARLEY'S AUNT	50	50
THE BRIDE CAME C.O.D.	50	50
MEET JOHN DOE	51	49
COMRADE X	51	49
BOOM TOWN	52	48
ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN	52	48
ZIEGFELD GIRL	52	48
THE MEN IN HER LIFE	53	47
YOU'LL NEVER GET RICH	53	47
SUN VALLEY SERENADE	53	47
MY FAVORITE WIFE	53	47
DOWN ARGENTINE WAY	54	46
ROAD TO SINGAPORE	54	46
MORTAL STORM	54	46
THE DOCTOR TAKES A WIFE	54	46
VIRGINIA	54	46
CITIZEN KANE	54	46
HOLD BACK THE DAWN	54	46
LADY EVE	54	46
TOM, DICK AND HARRY	54	46
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	54	46

	Female	*Male*
	%	%
MR. AND MRS. SMITH	55	45
THE DEVIL AND MISS JONES	55	45
MARYLAND	55	45
IRENE	55	45
THE MAN I MARRIED	55	45
SUSAN AND GOD	55	45
LILLIAN RUSSELL	55	45
HIRED WIFE	56	44
LUCKY PARTNERS	56	44
SUSPICION	56	44
THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WANTED	57	43
IT STARTED WITH EVE	57	43
THE LITTLE FOXES	58	42
PENNY SERENADE	58	42
MY LOVE CAME BACK	58	42
NO, NO, NANETTE	58	42
PHILADELPHIA STORY	58	42
LOVE CRAZY	59	41
THIS THING CALLED LOVE	59	41
THAT HAMILTON WOMAN	60	40
WHEN LADIES MEET	61	39
A WOMAN'S FACE	61	39
PRIMROSE PATH	61	39
KITTY FOYLE	61	39
IT'S A DATE	61	39
BACK STREET	62	38
THE GREAT LIE	62	38
NEW MOON	62	38
WATERLOO BRIDGE	63	37
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE	64	36
ALL THIS AND HEAVEN TOO	64	36
NICE GIRL?	65	35
THE LETTER	65	35
BLOSSOMS IN THE DUST	66	34
APPOINTMENT FOR LOVE	67	33
REBECCA	71	29

INFLUENCE

It has often been assumed that females exercise greater influence than males on the *choice* of pictures—wives picking their husbands' pictures, etc. Here are the facts: When mixed couples attend together (girl friend with boy friend, husband with wife, brother with sister, etc.) we find that the female is more often the chooser of the film. But men attend the theater *alone* much more often than women. The net result is that in fifty-one cases out of every hundred the picture is chosen by a male.

Princeton, July 14, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 166

STAND BY TO DIE

On May 20, we reported by telegram the results of our final tests as to the audience acceptance value of STAND BY TO DIE. The telegram said in part:

> ". . . We now find that the story is high First Class. . . . When tested with Russell and McCrea the picture received a vote which indicates a want-to-see of 83 per cent and hence high box-office expectancy assuming reasonable publicity penetration."

It may be helpful if we expand the telegram, particularly since our earlier telegram, reporting results of preliminary tests, reflected a less promising situation. In the first tests the story had demonstrated a higher than average audience acceptance value, but *not so high as one might reasonably have expected.* The final tests, on the other hand, revealed that the audience acceptance value of the property was so high as to present a first-class production opportunity.

The reason for the difference in results is simply that the synopses used in our first tests were based on inadequate information then at the disposal of the studio. When we subsequently received more complete information, we revised our own summary, emphasizing the elements of action and excitement, and *subordinating the romantic angle.* This simple change in emphasis dramatically increased the audience acceptance value of the story, particularly with men.

This is especially important, since aviation pictures generally rank very high in inherent interest to men, and are not particularly strong with women. Our first tests had indicated a danger that an aviation picture in which a *woman* played the aviator's role would alienate the men and boys who like aviation, without appealing strongly to women.

But this tendency failed to appear in the final tests, based on the revised synopses. Thus it appears that emphasis on the elements of action and adventure will minimize the hazard of alienating males, who are the enthusiastic patrons of aviation pictures.

STAND BY TO DIE succeeds in appealing strongly to large segments of the ticket-buying public, without alienating any large groups. It is somewhat above average with females, and far above average with men. It is above average with all age and income groups, but particularly strong with adolescents and the less prosperous.

In our revised synopses, we were able to explain that the secret photographing mission involved pretending to be lost, and that the flyers were intercepted by the Japanese. These additions apparently contributed somewhat to the improved reaction to the story.

Finally, as previously reported, the title STAND BY TO DIE is substantially stronger than the title under which we first tested the property, WINGS AND THE WOMAN. Comments indicate that STAND BY TO DIE conveys a more accurate conception of the nature of the picture.

The property has an additional inherent advantage in that it lends itself naturally to publicity. It is to be hoped that this asset can be fully exploited, and a high publicity penetration achieved.

The specific conclusions to be drawn from this report can be summarized as follows:

First, the elements of aviation and adventure are largely responsible for the story's high audience acceptance value. It is therefore vital that these elements dominate the story.

Second, Rosalind Russell now ranks among the first ten female stars.

Third, high publicity penetration is necessary in order to capitalize fully on the picture's high want-to-see vote.

FAVORABLE COMMENTS

"Rosalind Russell and Joel McCrea—I like them. And aviation would interest any male."—23-year-old unemployed electrical operator in Knoxville, Tennessee.

"I'd like to see how a woman would navigate a plane and see what the Japs would do."—34-year-old rug cleaner in New York City.

"This sounds like one of the better war pictures."—39-year-old wife of hardware salesman in Zanesville, Ohio.

"I wouldn't like a girl flyer but I'd like to see the show."—14-year-old son of clerk in dry goods store in Washington,

"*There's drama and adventure in it. Shows that women can really help.*"—42-year-old wife of rowing coach in Boston.

"*I'd like to see what punishments the Japs do to the spys.*"—26-year-old woman—typist for Housing Bureau in Knoxville, Tennessee.

UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS

"*Again the war is fictionized and prettied up.*"—37-year-old corporation lawyer in New York City.

"*This is so dramatic and Rosalind Russell is a typical comedienne. She just isn't the type for that kind of a movie.*"—34-year-old wife of auditor in Lexington, Kentucky.

"*It's the usual stuff—Boy Meets Girl—except they meet in Japan.*"—24-year-old liquor store clerk in the Bronx, New York.

"*It sounds like a propaganda picture—to hell with the war.*"—21-year-old platform sorter for railroad express in Boston.

Princeton, July 13, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

DARK HORSES OF 1942

Early in 1937 AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE conducted an experiment, the purpose of which was to find out which of the then little-known personalities showed the greatest promise of becoming big ticket-sellers in the years to come. The procedure employed in that experiment was to show ticket-buyers a list of personalities who were not then ranked among the first 200 in the Motion Picture Herald poll, and to ask these questions:

1. *"Are there any players on this list whom you definitely remember having seen?"*
2. *"And now, of those you have seen, which do you especially enjoy seeing?"*

By relating the "especially enjoy" vote to the "have seen" vote, we were able not only to measure the then popularity of the personalities concerned, but also to pick out those who showed greatest promise for the future. This procedure lead to the selection of Deanna Durbin, James Stewart, Tyrone Power, Melvyn Douglas and Madeleine Carroll.

In August, 1940 we repeated the same experiment. Among the first ten personalities who then emerged as the most promising marquee names were Lana Turner, Joan Fontaine, Jeffrey Lynn and Maureen O'Hara.

In April, 1941 the experiment was repeated a third time.

Today we are in a position to report the results of the *fourth* "dark horse" poll, conducted by the INSTITUTE in June, 1942. The following now emerge as showing the greatest promise:

1. **Van Heflin**
2. **Roddy McDowall**
3. **Alan Ladd**
4. **Jean Gabin**
5. **Joan Davis**
6. **Teresa Wright**
7. **Robert Cummings**
8. **Gloria Warren**

It would be idle to suppose that, because these eight personalities show promise today, they will all become major marquee names. For instance, it is doubtful whether any player, no matter how promising, can become a big marquee name if he is always denied the opportunity to appear opposite established stars in A pictures. Subsequent polls will detect signs of slipping and will also uncover any new promise among "dark horses" who had not yet attracted attention when the poll of June, 1942 was conducted.

Report 167.
Princeton, August 31, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 168

ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON

We have now completed tests to determine the audience acceptance value of ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON.

When tested without cast, the story received a vote of 57 per cent, thus ranking high in the Second Class. Without reference to treatment, cast, publicity penetration, or other values the audience acceptance value of the story itself is thus revealed as moderately promising, though not sensational.

We define Second Class stories as those which, *given big marquee names and high publicity penetration*, could make successful A pictures. With the high marquee value of Rogers and Grant, the prospects of ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON are favorable, assuming that the publicity penetration can be built to the level justified by the star and story values.

When tested with Rogers and Grant, ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON received a vote which is the equivalent of 80 per cent want-to-see on the INDEX OF PUBLICITY PENETRATION—another indication of satisfactory box-office expectancy. (SUSPICION registered a want-to-see of 82 per cent but was subnormal in publicity penetration.)

Analysis of the picture according to its appeal to various population groups reveals an interesting and rather unusual situation: the picture is about equally strong with all age and income groups, and with both sexes. The explanation is fairly simple. Rogers and Grant complement each other, Grant's popularity being greater among the more prosperous, whereas Ginger Rogers' following is greatest among the less prosperous.

So far as the story is concerned, the romance and the comedy implications make ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON attractive to women, whereas the excitement and the war background appeal to men and young people.

Whether or not theatergoers are correct in assuming the picture will have comedy aspects, we cannot tell. Certainly the synopsis sent us indicates opportunity for typical McCarey wit, but it is equally clear that these aspects could be left out. Whether or not the comedy possibilities could be exploited without shattering the mood of the picture is a matter of treatment and is a field in which we are not qualified to judge. However, if the comedy element can suitably be incorporated, the appeal of the picture will probably be enhanced.

The evidence reveals that certain factors in the situation operate to limit the prospects of this picture. Such factors include the following:

1. We normally find that a story tested with a strong cast emerges with a substantially higher vote than the same story tested without cast. ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON when tested with Rogers and Grant did in fact receive a higher vote than when tested without cast, but the increase was not as great as the marquee value of these personalities would be expected to yield. This fact suggests that ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON may not be the ideal vehicle for Rogers and Grant.

2. The title ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON when tested without cast and without reference to the story, demonstrated only moderate pulling power, and was particularly weak with men. Furthermore, to most theatergoers it suggested romance, or comedy, or both, but carried *no suggestion of adventure and excitement.* Yet those very elements of adventure, excitement and timeliness in the actual story operated to increase substantially its acceptance value with male ticket-buyers. It might be well to consider seeking a title which would capitalize on the elements of masculine appeal.

3. Comments reveal that the title suggests an "old time" picture to some respondents. When asked what kind of picture ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON would probably be, a good many persons replied about as follows: "An old couple looking back on their honeymoon."

4. While we haven't sufficient evidence to prove it, it seems reasonable to assume that an inadequate title increases the difficulty of building effective publicity penetration. If that is true, it is an important point. Since ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON is close to a First Class story, and since the stars both rank high, every additional point on the INDEX OF PUBLICITY PENETRATION is a cash asset.

FAVORABLE COMMENTS

"I like Cary Grant. It would probably be humorous along with the rest."

"I'd see this because she resembles me."

"For one thing I like the actors, another thing I like that kinda picture."

"Interesting because seldom an American marries a foreigner for others' money, and fun to see how she traps him."

"I'd see this. I don't like war stories, but I do like Ginger Rogers and Cary Grant."

"The actors usually turn in a fairly good performance, and the story sounds exciting."

"I like it for the story and for the actors, too."

"That's a different angle in it than the regular spy stories. Like the players too."

UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS

"I wouldn't! I do not like Ginger Rogers. I saw ROXIE HART *last night and it was terrible."*

"This is the kind of war picture I don't care for. It has absolutely no bearing on the war—making fun of it doesn't help it."

"I wouldn't like this. Too much war stuff, but I like the people in it."

"I don't particularly like Ginger Rogers in dramatic shows."

"No, these pictures are all alike."

Princeton, July 20, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 169

I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE

At the time staff members of Audience Research Institute discussed I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE with Mr. Lewton, the property was scheduled for production in the near future. Our main problem therefore was to gather information which might be helpful in making the picture, and specifically to determine which of two versions of the story had the greater audience acceptance value.

In both versions the central characters were a young nurse, a plantation owner, a ship captain, and, of course, the Zombie who was the wife of the planter. The main difference between the stories was that in one, the nurse and the planter fell in love, and the ship captain was the threat; in the other, the ship captain and the girl were the love interest, and the plantation owner proved to have administered the poison which had made his own wife a Zombie.

We interviewed a representative cross-section of movie-goers, showing them a synopsis of the first story, together with a synopsis of an altogether different movie, and simply asked them for which they would be more likely to buy a ticket. We then interviewed a *different* but comparable cross-section using the identical procedure, but substituting the second synopsis. By comparing the votes for the synopses, we had a measure of the difference.

> The obvious procedure, of showing the same people both synopses and asking them to choose between them, has the defect of asking people to be critics, which they are not. However, had time allowed an additional test, we would have employed this procedure for supplementary comments.

On August 19, we wired the results of the tests which showed little difference between the two, but a slight advantage for the version in which the ship captain was the malevolent character, and the girl and the planter the romantic interest.

Actually, the difference between the two versions was so slight that the reasonable conclusion is simply that the determining factor influencing audience reaction here is the basic subject matter itself and not the plot details. Thus the decision between the two stories depends on the judgment of the producer and his staff as to which they can develop more skillfully.

This situation is in line with our experience. In general, we have found that there is more difference in audience reaction to two different types of subject matter, than in two different plots for the same subject. However, we have tested stories in which modifications of the plot considerably altered the acceptance value of the property, and we shall welcome further assignments of the same kind.

In a separate test, we also measured the audience acceptance of the basic subject matter. It emerged with a vote of 48 per cent, which is slightly below the average of all stories tested, and places it high in the Third Class.

An audience acceptance value of 48 per cent is so low as to create a serious handicap for an A production.

We do not yet know whether or not the same standards apply to low budget properties, but it is clear that this property is not likely to be a sleeper.

Sources of Strength

The story is stronger with ticket-buyers under 30 than with older people, and is particularly popular with the age-group 12 to 18. It is somewhat stronger with men than with women.

In general, we find the greatest strength of mystery-horror stories to be among young people and men. I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE follows this pattern, but drew more than the normal share of its votes from people 12 to 18.

What Are Its Weaknesses?

The objections to the story, as revealed by comments and by statistical analysis, can be summarized as follows:

1. A considerable portion of the ticket-buyers interviewed said they wouldn't go to see it because they do not like this type.

2. A sizeable group consider it "too fantastic." (This objection may be overcome as Mr. Lewton told us there was scientific evidence on the subject.)

3. Another group described it as "too much like others," or said it sounded like a second feature. Several people said: "*It will probably have a cast you never heard of.*" A recognized marquee name, however minor, would probably do a great deal to overcome the resistance of all these people who dismiss the picture as run-of-the-mill.

INTERPRETATION OF THE TITLE

In connection with another study we asked a question about the meaning of the word "Zombie". Since the interviewing was confined to New York, the results should not be taken too seriously and are reported only as a matter of interest. We were interested to find that nearly a third of the persons interviewed defined the word fairly accurately; other people couldn't define it, but had some hazy notion not too far from the truth. Altogether, nearly half the people had a sufficiently correct impression to suggest the nature of the picture.

Of course, a good many people could define "Zombie" only as a potent cocktail!

Princeton, August 24, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 170

CANDY VENDING MACHINES

In a nation-wide poll conducted during the week ending August 29, the INSTITUTE put this question to a cross-section of ticket-buyers whose theaters have gum and candy machines in the lobby: *"Do you ever get candy or gum at any of these machines?"* Replies were as follows:

		YES	*NO*
		%	%
TOTAL		66	34
Males		69	31
Females		62	38
AGES	12-17	80	20
	18-30	67	33
	31 up	54	46
INCOMES	Prosperous	46	54
	Upper-Middle	64	36
	Middle	65	35
	Poor	69	31

People who go to the movies frequently have got around to using the machines sooner than the people who go infrequently. This fact indicates that their use is likely to *increase* as the years go by. There is a tendency for the frequent movie-goers to do today what the infrequent do tomorrow:

	YES	*NO*
	%	%
Infrequent movie-goers	60	40
Normal movie-goers	63	37
Frequent movie-goers	73	27

The ordinary "average" movie-goer, who likes double features, uses the vending machines more than the fastidious, sophisticated minority who prefer single features:

	YES	*NO*
	%	%
Those who prefer doubles	76	24
Those who prefer singles	59	41

The next question asked was: *"Do you like to eat candy while watching a movie?"* Analysis of replies shows that the patrons of theaters where vending machines are installed have come to like eating candy more than the patrons of other theaters. This finding indicates that the installation of the machine tends to stimulate the habit of eating candy:

	Like to Eat Candy While Watching Movie
	%
Those whose theaters have vending machines	65
Those whose theaters do *not* have vending machines	61

Here are the figures for other segments of the movie-going public:

		Like to Eat Candy	*Don't like to Eat Candy*
		%	%
TOTAL, all persons interviewed		64	36
AGES	12-17	87	13
	18-30	67	33
	30 up	42	58
INCOMES	Prosperous	42	58
	Upper-Middle	62	38
	Middle	68	32
	Poor	70	30
Infrequent movie-goers		47	53
Normal movie-goers		70	30
Frequent movie-goers		75	25

Those who like to eat candy while watching a movie (64 per cent) were asked for their reasons. The replies fall into seven main categories, which emerge in this order:

1. *Just like it—don't know why—habit.*
2. *Something to do; pass the time.*
3. *I get hungry.*
4. *Soothes my nerves when the picture is exciting.*
5. *Makes me enjoy the picture more.*
6. *Relaxes me more.*
7. *Otherwise I'd bite my fingernails.*

The reasons advanced by those who do *not* like to eat candy while watching a movie were as follows:

1. *Never eat candy, etc.—don't know why.*
2. *Makes too much noise—the paper or the chewing.*
3. *Annoys me when others do it, so I don't do it myself.*
4. *Detracts my attention from the picture.*
5. *I don't go to the movies to eat.*
6. *It decays my teeth; gets in my teeth; gives me a toothache.*

* * * * *

The final question was: *"Do you like or dislike the idea of having candy stands in the lobby?"* Analysis of replies shows that those movie-goers whose theaters have already installed vending machines like the idea better than those who have not had the opportunity of experiencing the convenience of candy machines:

	Like %	*Dislike* %
ALL PERSONS INTERVIEWED	78	22
Those whose theaters have vending machines	79	21
Those whose theaters do not have vending machines	75	25

Notice that the total percentage who dislike the idea of vending machines in the lobby is only 22 per cent, as compared with 34 per cent who never use them.

Scrutiny of the comments recorded by our interviewers reveals that almost the only people who actively dislike the idea of vending machines are those who object to the noise made by unwrapping and chewing candy during the show. The interests which sponsor the machines might do well to disarm this objection—either by admonishing the candy-eater to unwrap and consume his purchase *quietly*, or by introducing and publicising a non-crinkle, non-crackle wrapping paper.

Objections to vending machines are found to be more common among the rich than among the poor. This means that the average theater-manager is likely to hear a disproportionate number of squawks against the machines, because the prosperous minority is generally more articulate than the poor majority.

		Like The Idea	*Dislike*
		%	%
INCOMES	Prosperous	66	34
	Upper-Middle	74	26
	Middle	80	20
	Poor	81	19

* * * * *

A recent survey of candy-eating habits in the United States revealed the following facts:

1. Out of every ten persons who buy candy in an average week, six buy it in the form of 5¢ bars, two buy it in bulk, one buys it in the box, and one buys it in all three forms.

2. 90,000,000 5¢ candy bars are purchased weekly by urban consumers alone, giving a weekly per capita consumption of 1.51 bars.

3. 56 per cent of all candy is purchased by males, 44 per cent by females.

4. 54 per cent of all candy is purchased by persons under 24 years of age. It is significant that the movie-going habit also is concentrated in the younger age-groups. There is a high degree of correlation between movie-going and candy-eating.

5. Although persons in the upper-income levels buy candy more often than persons in the low income levels, 87 per cent of all candy sales are to persons with incomes below $60 a week.

> *NOTE: While the prosperous buy candy more often than the poor, they use the vending machines less often. Such resistance as there is to the vending machines is concentrated in the high income-groups.*

Princeton, September 1, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 171

FRANK ROSS ORIGINAL

Measurement of the audience acceptance value of a light comedy is a more difficult research problem than measurement of other types of stories. The reason is that the ultimate audience reaction to a light comedy depends so much on *treatment*.

Nevertheless, our experience has consistently demonstrated that a low *basic* audience acceptance value is a handicap to a light comedy, just as it is to an adventure story, a drama, or any other property. Other elements —cast, treatment, dialogue—may *overcome* the handicap, but the handicap remains.

We have succeeded in refining our procedures sufficiently to make our prognoses fairly accurate even in the case of light comedies. For example, the same basic procedure employed in the case of Mr. Ross's original previously enabled us to estimate the audience potential of MY FAVORITE WIFE within 3 per cent on the scale of the RKO Theater Department; and reference to our report files will show that our estimates were accurate, within ten points, in the case of THE DEVIL AND MISS JONES, MY LIFE WITH CAROLINE, MR. AND MRS. SMITH, TOM, DICK AND HARRY, THE TUTTLES OF TAHITI, WEEKEND FOR THREE.

In spite of this record, it must be emphasized that, in the case of all *light comedies,* the Institute's findings are less likely to be conclusive than in the case of other types of picture.

With that reservation established, we can report that in a nation-wide poll conducted during the week ending August 15, Mr. Ross's untitled original received a vote of 34 per cent, which places it low in Third Class.

Having previously submitted more than 300 other stories to the same test procedure, we can compare reactions to the Ardrey-Kanin story with the average reaction to all stories tested.

		Ardrey-Kanin Original In Relation To Average
		%
TOTAL		−37
Males		−57
Females		−15
INCOMES	Prosperous	−47
	Upper-Middle	−43
	Middle	−37
	Poor	−14

Notice that the story appeals more to the low income-groups than to the high income-groups. From this angle it is an unfortunate choice for Jean Arthur, since her marquee value is concentrated in the high income-groups. (See Continuing Audit Of Marquee Values, Analysis By Age, Sex, Income And Size Of Community.)

When a story makes a bad showing in Institute tests, it is generally possible for us to diagnose one or more specific reasons for its disappointing performance. In such cases it is often possible for the producer to eliminate the major points of resistance and so to increase the story's audience potential. In this case, however, we are unable to make any such diagnosis. The majority reaction is not one of articulate objection to any specific elements, but simply a general lack of interest.

The comments attached to this report are typical of those recorded verbatim by our interviewers throughout the United States. They come from the following areas:

Clarendon, Texas
Chicago, Ill.
Indianapolis, Ind.
Syracuse, N. Y.
Omaha, Neb.
New Braunfels, Texas
Cleveland, Ohio
Pittsburgh, Pa.
St. Louis, Mo.
Philadelphia, Pa.
Youngstown, Ohio
Brooklyn, N. Y.
Cincinnati, Ohio
Washington, Iowa
Redwood City, Calif.
Greeley, Col.
Detroit, Mich.
Lincoln, Neb.
Sheffield, Ala.
Middletown, Conn.
St. Paul, Minn.
Columbia, Tenn.
Lowell, Mass.
Rochester, N. Y.
New Brunswick, N. J.
Oakland, Calif.
Birmingham, Ala.
Lexington, Mass.
New York City
LaCrosse, Wisc.
New Orleans, La.
San Francisco, Calif.
Connellsville, Pa.

In a subsequent poll, employing a parallel cross-section, we tested the audience potential of the story when cast with Jean Arthur and John Wayne. Once again we can compare the results with the average for all pictures tested by the Institute.

		FOURTEEN BLISSFUL DAYS WITH ARTHUR AND WAYNE *In Relation to Average*
		%
TOTAL		–28
Males		–38
Females		–20
AGES	12-17	–15
	18-30	–29
	31-up	–35
INCOMES	Prosperous	–62
	Upper-Middle	–33
	Middle	–22
	Poor	–22
Infrequent		–43
Normal		–18
Frequent		–14

Here we see a Jean Arthur picture which appeals less to the educated segment of the movie-going public than to the uneducated—a reversal of the normal Jean Arthur situation.

The following table shows the vote for this picture as compared with the vote for other comedies tested by the Institute:

	+ or — Average
	%
My Favorite Wife	+24
Mr. and Mrs. Smith	+10
Tom, Dick and Harry	+8
My Life With Caroline	–10
The Devil and Miss Jones	–22
Fourteen Blissful Days	–28

(72) + 4 - Index LXI

John Wayne has not been included in the AUDIT since October, 1941. At that time he was not among the first one hundred. His following is concentrated among boys and the lowest income levels.

When the Institute issued its first AUDIT OF MARQUEE VALUES, in April, 1940, Jean Arthur was among the top *six* actresses. But in the eleventh edition of the AUDIT, for July, 1942, she does not rank among the top *thirty* actresses. In April, 1940, she was one of the *sixteen* biggest ticket-sellers of either sex; in the AUDIT for July, 1942, she is not among the first *seventy*.

It may be that her performance in THE TALK OF THE TOWN will go some way towards restoring her lost marquee value. But it is doubtful whether more than one ticket-buyer in four will see that picture, so that its effect on her popularity is bound to be limited. It is therefore of special importance to insure that the next story in which she appears is a story which the public considers important—and wants to see. Much is at stake.

TITLE

In a separate poll we tested the relative pulling power of the title FOURTEEN BLISSFUL DAYS and the title FREE FOR ALL. The vote was as follows:

	%
FREE FOR ALL	71
FOURTEEN BLISSFUL DAYS	29

Subsequent questioning revealed that, so far as the large majority (74 per cent) of movie-goers are concerned, the title FREE FOR ALL is misleading. To them it implies freedom for all, the Four Freedoms, democracy for all, the fight for freedom, etc.

The title FOURTEEN BLISSFUL DAYS was not found to have any misleading connotations, but it received a very low vote. We therefore conclude that the search for a title should continue. Tests on MOLLIE HAD A HOLIDAY are now proceeding.

Princeton, September 1, 1942.

FAVORABLE COMMENTS

"*It's something that might happen to any girl.*"—Telephone operator.

"*I'd enjoy doing this myself.*"—Comptometer operator—Female.

"*I'd like to see that guy land in her lap!*"—Housewife.

"*That would be a change from everyday life.*"—Horsedealer.

"*Wouldn't miss it for all the money in the world. Sort of puts him in the same boat with me. I'd have been married if I had give up the rodeo.* My *stenographer won't leave her job to go West with me.*"—Bull rider in rodeo.

"*Leave you with a good feeling—sounds like* IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT."—X-ray technician.

"*I've seen a story like that before and it was pretty funny. I'd like that.*"—Housewife.

"*Sounds like it would be fun.*"—Manageress of beauty-shop.

"*Good diversion—plenty of laughs.*"—Barber.

"*Light and cute.*"—Housewife.

"*Sounds like a light picture for escape.*"—Dental assistant.

"*Simple and real and kind of romantic.*"—Baker's wife.

"*I expect it to be very funny.*"—Student.

"*It would be good entertainment.*"—Female soda jerker.

"*This would be swell.*"—Housewife.

"*Slap-happy.*"—Planer in furnace plant.

"*One of those sweet little love stories.*"—Wife of police-officer.

"*If I wanted to go to a movie pretty bad, I might see this.*"—Farmer's wife.

"*You bet. I'm a stenographer myself.*"—Stenographer.

"*I'd see it to find out if Steve loves her.*"—Schoolgirl.

"It sounds funny—she didn't expect to miss the bus and had to hitch-hike. I can imagine that."—Student.

"It's part of living—she *never thought her dreams would come true."*—Restaurant manager.

"It might be funny—the way she finds the fellow and all that about the rodeo."—Laborer.

"It's her vacation and it shows where her dream man is going to land! Guess I'm romantic."—Student.

"Might be some nice scenery in the picture."—Housewife.

"Lady goes to Wyoming—that's adventure; finds her man—that's romance."—Cook.

UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS

"Too many 'cowboy and the lady' movies."—Store clerk.

"Too much like LADY IN A JAM."—Fountain clerk.

"The plot is too old and too corny."—Tractor driver at Arsenal.

"Corn on the cob—like every other movie I've seen."—Dress manufacturer.

"So many of that kind around. You get tired of it."—Electrician.

"It doesn't sound very new."—Stenographer, defense plant.

"Another run-of-the-mill."—Reporter.

"Sort of a cowboy thing."—Housewife.

"Typical stinkaroo. It just wouldn't appeal."—Secretary of ore marketing firm.

"I wouldn't see it if you gave me a pass."—Salesman in department store.

"Too humdrum—trite."—Naval architect.

"It doesn't give you anything when you get through."—Home economist.

"*There wouldn't be anything to that picture.*"—Student.

"*It doesn't seem to have any climax.*"—Farmer.

"*It's silly. I like a picture with a story to it.*"—Housewife.

"*I imagine it would be a horse-comedy.*"—Mine foreman.

"*Bull! I can think up better stories myself.*"—Carpenter.

"*I've seen it before.*"—Secretary.

"*Just a story for a second-rate feature.*"—Uniform cutter.

"*A 'B' picture.*"—Government clerk.

"*Grade C — reads like a love-story magazine.*"—Textile designer.

"*Unbelievable. It couldn't happen.*"—Actor.

"*It doesn't sound very probably—someone taking their life-savings just to go on a vacation trip.*"—Poultry farmer.

"*Crummy.*"—Housewife.

"*Sounds like a high school play.*"—Student.

"*The same old thing. Trite.*"—Doctor.

"*Nothing to it.*"—High school teacher.

"*Well, for gosh sakes—it's silly. That's why I don't like it.*"—Housewife.

"*I told you I like comedy but I didn't mean this particular kind of tripe.*"—Draftsman.

"*T'ain't funny, McGee.*"—Mechanic.

"*It don't sound so very well put together, for one thing.*"—Student.

"*That's dime novel stuff.*"—Nurse.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 172

CHANGES IN STAR VALUES

It is interesting to compare the INSTITUTE's Eleventh Audit of Marquee Values with the First Audit of more than two years ago.

ACTORS

GAINERS	*Rank In First Audit April 1940*	*Rank In Eleventh Audit July 1942*
Gary Cooper	9	2
Bob Hope	27	6
Abbott & Costello	Not Included	9
Walter Pidgeon	95	12
Red Skelton	Not Included	16
Humphrey Bogart	72	23
LOSERS		
Paul Muni	8	47
Charles Boyer	15	50
Ronald Colman	17	54
Nelson Eddy	17	62
Fred Astaire	28	64
Charles Laughton	28	75

ACTRESSES

GAINERS	*Rank In First Audit April 1940*	*Rank In Eleventh Audit July 1942*
Ann Sheridan	67	14
Betty Grable	Not Included	17
Rosalind Russell	52	18
Olivia De Havilland	55	19
Lana Turner	94	21
Greer Garson	100	28
Joan Fontaine	103	30
LOSERS		
Deanna Durbin	6	26
Myrna Loy	11	47
Jeanette MacDonald	20	53
Irene Dunne	23	66
Jean Arthur	14	72
Greta Garbo	46	101

Princeton, September 8, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 173

SWING SHIFT

In a nation-wide survey conducted by the Institute during the week ending August 29, we showed ticket-buyers a list of five backgrounds for motion pictures and asked them which they would especially like to see. These backgrounds, in order of the final vote, were as follows:

1. Doctors in hospitals.
2. **People in war industries.**
3. Swing orchestra players.
4. Rangers in the forest service.
5. Professional football players.

Notice that we did not specify any particular war industry, so that the vote probably represents the average acceptance for *all* war industries. In a subsequent question, we showed ticket-buyers a list of five specific war industries and asked them which they would be *most* interested in seeing as a background for a motion picture; and which they would be *least* interested in seeing. The results are as follows:

	Most Interesting	*Least Interesting*
	%	%
Aircraft factories	56	3
Shipyards	19	9
Munitions factories	11	12
Steel	7	22
Mining	7	54

Notice that aircraft factories received more votes than the other four categories combined.

On August 21 we received the studio's fifteen page synopsis of the Barzman-Taffel original story entitled Swing Shift, and during the week ending September 5 we exposed this story to a representative cross-section of ticket-buyers throughout the country.

Swing Shift received a vote of 63 per cent, thus qualifying for the rare First Class.

Inspection of the comments recorded by our interviewers demonstrates that the high audience acceptance value of this property derives primarily from its airplane-factory background. It is probable that, if the story line were stronger, Swing Shift would have received an even higher vote.

We are able to identify these two primary points of resistance to Swing Shift:

1. The story line is considered ordinary. This could be remedied.

2. Some ticket-buyers object to Swing Shift on the grounds that it is propaganda. Said a machinist helper, working on the railroad: *"More defense and war stuff and I tell you I am sick of it. Not exactly propaganda, but . . ."*

Swing Shift is strongest with ticket-buyers under eighteen years of age:

		%
Ages:	12-17	81
	18-30	59
	31-up	54

It is not so strong in big cities as in towns under 10,000—a fact which is in the story's disfavor from a distributon standpoint:

		%
Towns	under 10,000	74
	10,000-100,000	66
	100,000-500,000	59
	500,000-up	58

SWING SHIFT is particularly strong with the low income-groups—who pay less for their tickets and tend to patronize the subsequent run, rental houses:

		%
INCOMES:	Prosperous	55
	Upper-Middle	56
	Middle	65
	Poor	73

Said a riveter: "*I am a riveter myself and I would enjoy seeing a picture of this type.*" Said a metalsmith at a naval base: "*That sort of shows my own experiences.*" Said a steam fitter at a shipyard: "SWING SHIFT *shows it is as important to make planes as it is to fly them—shows civilians are important.*" Said the wife of a coal miner: "*Too many people look down on those of us who are keeping them rolling. We need a picture like this just now.*" These are the kind of people about whom the story of SWING SHIFT revolves.

Princeton, September 8, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 174

THE ROBE (Preliminary)

The responsibilities of the INSTITUTE in connection with THE ROBE fall into two main categories. Our first concern is to determine the audience acceptance value of the basic subject matter of the story. Our second concern is to determine which of several alternatives, in regard to casting, amount of emphasis on various elements of the story, and so on, would most favorably influence audience reaction to the picture.

This preliminary report is concerned only with the *first* problem—the audience acceptance value of the basic subject matter. Our next report will be concerned with the second phase.

* * * * *

When the INSTITUTE tests a story, three things can happen:

1. The story can emerge in Third Class. Stories *low* in Third Class are so limited in basic appeal as to make production highly speculative.

2. The story can emerge in the First Class. Those rare stories which emerge high in the First Class start with a great advantage, without regard to treatment, cast, or other production considerations.

3. The story can emerge in the Second Class with neither a high nor a low basic audience acceptance. Second Class stories start with neither a handicap nor an advantage in audience acceptance value, so that the profit possibilities of the picture are more than ordinarily influenced by the cost of production, and the various production elements, such as casting, direction, and so on.

* * * * *

THE ROBE emerges high in the Second Class. Thus the most unfavorable possibility—that the story would be low Third Class—did not develop.

Three different synopses of The Robe have already been tested. The strongest synopsis received a vote of 58 per cent—high Second Class. The weakest synopsis received a vote of 52 per cent—low Second Class. That, then, is the range of the story's audience potential—52 per cent to 58 per cent.*

Here, for comparison, are the votes registered by other stories recently tested for RKO:

	%
China Sky	81
Bombardier	69
The Fallen Sparrow	64
Swing Shift	63
Six Lives Of The Sally Jean	59
The Robe	58
History Of Mr. Polly	49
Thieves Like Us	47
There Goes Lona Henry	46
Challenge To The Night	45
Father Malachy's Miracle	35
The Gilded Pheasant	33

In a nation-wide poll conducted three years ago, Dr. Gallup found that the most popular authors in the Unted States were Zane Grey, Kathleen Norris, John Steinbeck and Lloyd Douglas—in that order. And a study just completed by the Institute revealed that 24 per cent of female movie-goers, 12 per cent of males, can identify Lloyd Douglas.

If The Robe tests at 58 per cent today, it may fairly be assumed that it will move up several notches if and when it becomes a best-seller. There is the rub. *Will* The Robe become a best-seller? The Institute has experimented in the field of book-publishing, but has only once predicted the sale of a novel—Kings Row. According to Simon and Schuster, the publishers for whom this experiment was conducted, our prediction has proved to be highly accurate. But the research procedure involved is cumbersome and expensive, and in the present case we have been unable to apply it.

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* We also used a ten page synopsis sent us by Mr. Ross, which proved useful in obtaining comments, and in eliciting reactions to specific phases of the story. However, the Ross synopsis produced a less favorable *over-all* reaction than our own shorter, high-lighted versions. The explanation is simply that movie-goers found it difficult to visualize a *movie* on the basis of the Ross synopsis. Our own descriptions are designed to aid that process.

Reaction to THE ROBE shows unusual differences by section of the country. It is strong in the South, relatively weak in the West:

	%
South *	64
Midwest	55
East	53
West	52

The story is stronger in rural areas and small towns than in those big centers of population where the lucrative first-run theaters are concentrated. It is also stronger with kids under eighteen than with the older age-groups who pay more for their admission:

		%
AGES:	12-17	66
	18-30	53
	31-up	52

It may be the adventure element in THE ROBE which appeals so strongly to the young. Inspection of their comments also suggests that they feel a lively curiosity about the crucifixion and the early Christians; their curiosity has not yet been blunted by constant exposure to conventional presentations of this subject.

We find that curiosity is, in fact, one of the primary factors upon which the appeal of THE ROBE is based. It is therefore desirable that the exploitation campaign for the picture should do everything possible to stimulate this curiosity. For example, it would not be difficult to initiate a controversy in the press as to whether Jesus should actually appear in the picture. Some say YES, some say NO.

When questioned on this specific point, ticket-buyers gave our interviewers such widely different replies as the following: "Yes, I'd show his face—I'd have him distinguished looking, so you could tell hm." "No, I would *not* show his face on the screen. I don't know how in hell they would do it." "You could do it by the expressions on the faces of the people around." "Play it against a wall—shadows or silhouettes." "I would rather do the thing without all those shots of his back. Have somebody play the part who is strong enough. I'd like him to be real and strong, not some weak-looking individual." "I'd have him look like a human being. No halos." So the argument ran in our interviews—an argument which could spread throughout the country.

---

* Includes the Bible Belt—Missouri, Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, etc.

THE ROBE is found to be stronger with persons whose family income is below $25 a week than with the prosperous:

		%
INCOMES:	Below $25	68
	Above $25	52

Unfortunately the poor tend to see their pictures in low-rental, subsequent-run houses. Here we have another key piece to add to the mosaic which begins to emerge: THE ROBE is strong in agricultural communities, with the young and with the poor.

How about the various *religious groups?* Obviously, the nature of this story is such that it might alienate members of some faiths while appealing strongly to others. Thus far, we find no evidence of profound variations in reaction to the story as between members of different religions. Conclusions on this point will have to await the analysis of additional data, now in progress.

In the meantime, this information is interesting. We asked: "Would you say that people are *more* interested or *less* interested in religion than they were?" The replies of those with opinions on this question were:

	%
More interested	58
Less interested	42

Now look at the vote for THE ROBE in terms of the above questions:

	Vote for THE ROBE %
Those who believe people are more interested in religion than they were.	59
Those who believe people are less interested.	51

Although THE ROBE is a story about many things besides religion, it is the religious aspect which draws the most attention, and influences the most votes *pro* and *con.*

Those who vote *against* THE ROBE as a religious story do so for one of two reasons: (1) Because, in the words of a 14-year-old schoolboy: "You get so much of that in church and Catechism that it's sort of old stuff." And in the words of a 30-year-old steel salesman: "I don't like religious pictures, I like my religion in Church." (2) Because many people doubt the ability of "Hollywood" to handle such a delicate assignment without offense. The producer who believes himself capable of meeting this challenge would therefore be justified in adding some points to the 52-58 per cent vote recorded in our tests.

Reactions to THE ROBE shows a tendency to be conditioned by what the respondent remembers of previous pictures. This operates to help the vote for THE ROBE, because most of the Biblical pictures which moviegoers remember were magnificently spectacular—THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, THE SIGN OF THE CROSS, QUO VADIS. It is widely assumed that THE ROBE will be in this same expensive tradition.

In all its tests THE ROBE has displayed a marked weakness with females. That is normal for any story which chiefly concerns a man. Mr. Ross's synopsis builds up the role of Diana, and this should operate to increase the picture's acceptance with females.

* * * * *

In a nation-wide poll conducted during the week ending September 12, we tested the audience potential of THE ROBE *when cast with Gary Cooper*. While a considerable number of respondents objected that "Gary Cooper would look silly all dressed up like that," the actual vote recorded would indicate a want-to-see of 82 per cent when the picture reaches the INDEX of Publicity Penetration.

Among the problematical factors in the equation are these:

1. Is Gary Cooper available? He is now the second biggest ticket-seller in pictures (see July AUDIT) so that it would not be safe to assume an equivalent want-to-see with a lesser star.*

2. Will the money or the materials be available to make it the super-spectacle which ticket-buyers expect it to be?

3. Will THE ROBE be a best-seller?

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* Reactions to Errol Flynn in the role of Marcellus indicate that ticket-buyers consider him too much the arrogant swashbuckler—not thoughtful enough for Marcellus.

Princeton, September 14, 1942.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 175

EVERYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM

(THE STORY OF TEX RICKARD)

Tests just completed of EVERYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM reveal an overall audience acceptance value of 56 per cent—middle Second Class.

Analysis of the difference in reaction among various audience groups reveals a striking contrast between men and women. Whereas 76 per cent of male ticket-buyers say they would see the picture, only 37 per cent of females react favorably.

Explanation of this great difference is suggested by the comments, which reveal that reactions to the subject matter of this property center around reactions to prize fighting. Despite the fact that the story concerns a fight promoter rather than a boxer, and that it includes settings other than the prize ring, most ticket-buyers interviewed were preoccupied with the prize fight element.

In general, those who wanted to see the picture were those who like prize fights; those who didn't were those who dislike prize fights. The following female reactions to the Tex Rickard story are typical:

> *"It's more for men; I don't care for fights anyway."*
>
> *"My son and my husband might see it."*
>
> *"I'm not fond of anything that pertains to boxing."*
>
> *"I'm not interested in fighting. It would be all right for boys who like boxing."*
>
> *"Fight promoters don't interest me."*

While the story is somewhat stronger with ticket-buyers under eighteen than with the more mature, there is no other significant variation between groups aside from the profound difference between men and women.

* * * * *

In the last two years, there have been two successful pictures about famous figures in the world of sport: Lou Gehrig and Knute Rockne.

It is interesting to recall the INSTITUTE's early tests of the audience acceptance value of the story of Lou Gehrig, many of them conducted before Mr. Goldwyn's acquisition of the property. We found that when tested without cast the story emerged in the First Class (69 per cent), with a vote of 79 per cent from males and 59 per cent from females.

Thus, as in the case of EVERYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM, the story of Lou Gehrig started with a greater appeal for men than for women. But whereas 59 per cent of women voted for Gehrig, only 37 per cent voted for the Rickard story.

In THE LIFE OF LOU GEHRIG, it was possible to build up a powerful human interest story, which undoubtedly enhanced the picture's appeal to women, as well as to capitalize on the existing interest in baseball and baseball players. And Knute Rockne was not without appeal to the emotions. It is a question whether or not the story of Rickard offers the same opportunity for a personal story appealing to women. Said a bank clerk: *"Who gives a damn about Tex Rickard?"*

It is relevant to report that previous studies conducted by the INSTITUTE have shown that over-all interest in the subject of prize fighting is confined to a relatively small segment of the population, as compared with baseball and football.

For example, the number of people who read boxing items in newspapers is only *half* the number of people who read baseball items. A study of "reader traffic" on the sports pages of ten newspapers * revealed that the average readership of the best-read boxing news was only 17 per cent, as against 33 per cent for baseball and 22 per cent for football. These percentages represent the proportion of persons interviewed who had read the subject matter in question; interviewing was well distributed throughout the year.

However it must be emphasized that the *male* vote for Tex Rickard is so considerable that, provided the budget were kept within strict limits, and provided every advantage were taken of the exploitation possibilities inherent in the subject, a profitable picture might result.

We are now undertaking to determine what proportion of the movie-going public is familiar with the name of Rickard. This information will be forwarded as soon as it is available.

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* New York "Times," Manchester "Leader," South Bend "Tribune," New York "Herald Tribune," Chicago "Tribune," Canton "Repository," Cleveland "Press," Pittsburgh "Post-Gazette," Scranton "Times" and Pittsburgh "Press."

Princeton, September 16, 1942.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 176

GOVERNMENT GIRL

On August 29 the Institute received instructions to test an outline of Adela Rogers St. Johns' serial, Government Girl, which is to be published in the "Ladies' Home Journal."

In a nation-wide poll conducted during the week of September 5, we measured the audience acceptance value of the basic subject matter without reference to cast, employing our usual story-test procedure. Government Girl received a vote of 60 per cent, thus emerging on the borderline of First Class.

The main factor responsible for this favorable showing is that the story appeals strongly to women and girls. While it is slightly below average among males, it is considerably above average with females—naturally enough, since the central character is a woman.

Favorable audience reactions to the story stem largely from three main elements, as reflected by the comments:

> 1. It is *timely*. Said the eighteen-year-old daughter of a lumber dealer: *"There's a lot being talked about a girl's life in Washington. I'd like to see present day Washington."* A middle-aged counter man in a lunch wagon put it more briefly: *"It's about what is happening in the world."*
>
> 2. It is a natural in *self-identification*, particularly for white-collar girls and their sisters in factories, who are an important group within the motion picture audience. *"I'd like to see how the work goes on down there. I have a girl friend who has a government job."*
>
> 3. It has a *message*. While this may seem like a dubious asset, we have often found that movie-goers react favorably to a picture which to entertainment adds an element of being "worthwhile." Many ticket-buyers mentioned this aspect. Said a young liquor clerk: *"It teaches a lesson that we need. I'd like to see James Stewart and Jean Arthur in it."*

The adverse reactions, largely masculine, were for the most part preoccupied with their dislike of "love stuff," or with a belief that the story would be trite. The validity of these objections will naturally depend on the specific situations which Miss St. Johns has not yet written.

As for differences in acceptance value between various groups within the audience, GOVERNMENT GIRL is about equally strong with all ages. For some reason not clear to us, there is a considerable difference in the vote by income-groups. The property is stronger with the prosperous and average groups than with the poor.

Next week we shall report on the audience potential of GOVERNMENT GIRL when cast with Ginger Rogers.

Princeton, September 16, 1942.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 177

THE COMPANY SHE KEEPS

The INSTITUTE has just completed a study of the audience acceptance value of a picture based on Mary McCarthy's novel, THE COMPANY SHE KEEPS. Using our standard story-test procedure, our interviewers questioned a representative cross-section of ticket-buyers between September 8 and September 16.

With an acceptance value of 36 per cent, the story emerges low in the Third Class when tested without cast. The story is uniformly weak among the different age and income groups. As might be expected, however, it is somewhat stronger with females than with males. But even among women, it is below average.

Whenever possible in conducting story tests, we supplement our basic procedure with additional questions designed to reveal any specific sources of strength or weakness in the property. In this instance, the supplementary questions revealed no information beyond that set forth by the figures themselves.

The figures and the attached comments tell the story of audience reaction to this property *in its present form.*

Princeton, September 24, 1942

FAVORABLE COMMENTS

"It would be good evening's entertainment. Just relax in the show and cry with it or laugh with it."—23-year-old clerk in shoe store, Trenton.

"I think it would be a very good love story."—28-year-old grocer, Kingsport, Tenn.

"The adventures of a business girl in New York are always interesting."—18-year-old housewife. Husband is a private in the Army. Denver.

"Because I'm married for one thing; like pictures like that with struggles in it."—20-year-old housewife. Husband drives milk truck for creamery. Binghamton, N. Y.

UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS

"That is the same thing; it happens every day."—56-year-old signal repairman for railroad, Albany.

"Slush!! In times like this what do I care about the woman and her career?"—34-year-old teacher in high school, Chicago.

"I think I have seen this already too often."—52-year-old chemist, New York City.

"Too many stories like this if you ask me; more a woman's picture."—19-year-old bookkeeper, New York City.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 178

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

On August 31, the INSTITUTE wired that the property, PORTRAIT OF A LADY, when tested without cast, had emerged on the borderline between Second and Third Class.

In a separate study conducted between September 8 and 16 our interviewers questioned a representative cross-section of ticket-buyers to see whether Rosalind Russell or Claudette Colbert would be more acceptable in the leading role. We began with our standard procedure for testing stories without cast, showing theatergoers a synopsis of the story and questioning them concerning their reaction. We then asked which actress would most make them want to see the picture. Results were as follows:

	Per Cent of All Ticket-Buyers Interviewed Who Chose
Rosalind Russell	61
Claudette Colbert	39

But the attitude of those who like the basic story is more important. Among this group, Miss Russell's margin is slightly higher, as follows:

	Per Cent of Ticket-Buyers Who Want to See PORTRAIT OF A LADY *Who Chose*
Rosalind Russell	66
Claudette Colbert	34

Ticket-buyers were then asked to give reasons for their choice. Analysis of the replies indicates that, while neither player is considered miscast, Rosalind Russell is associated with light comedy in the minds of a larger proportion of theatergoers than is Claudette Colbert.

Actually, unless the motion picture public considered one player or the other hopelessly miscast, the figures show about what would be expected on the basis of the last Audit. In July, Miss Russell ranked fifth among all actresses, Miss Colbert sixteenth.

But the fact that the title role in PORTRAIT OF A LADY does not seem inappropriate for either of these popular personalities should not obscure the fundamental audience reaction to the basic subject matter. With an over-all vote of 50 per cent when tested without cast, the property barely escapes Third Class. Third Class stories are those which are so weak in basic appeal that other elements—cast, treatment, and publicity among others—must be maximum if the picture is to attract enough patrons to the box-office to do satisfactory A business.

Admittedly, measurement of the audience acceptance of a light comedy is a more difficult research problem than measurement of other types of stories. The reason is that ultimate audience reaction to a light comedy depends so much on cast (and the casting here seems to be satisfactory) and *treatment*. But our experience has consistently demonstrated that a low basic audience acceptance value is a handicap to a light comedy, just as it is to any other type of property. And a high basic audience acceptance value is an asset.

Analysis of the acceptance value of PORTRAIT OF A LADY by audience groups reveals that the property is stronger with women than with men—but even among women, it is only average. And it is below average among all age and income groups.

Inspection of the comments reveal that the dominant objection to the story is that it is too ordinary—"*the same old thing*." Half the ticket-buyers who don't want to see the picture gave their reason in these terms. But a sizeable proportion also objected to the multiple marriage theme. This aspect, of course, is one that could be minimized if the picture is made.

It may be relevant to recall the performance of Warner Brothers' 1940 picture, NO TIME FOR COMEDY, with Rosalind Russell and James Stewart. That picture, in some respects similar to PORTRAIT OF A LADY, was reported at 104 per cent on the RKO Classification.

Princeton, October 1, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 179

TALL IN THE SADDLE

In a nation-wide study conducted between September 30 and October 7 the INSTITUTE measured the audience acceptance value of the property, TALL IN THE SADDLE. Using our standard procedure for testing stories without cast, our interviewers questioned a representative cross-section of ticket-buyers throughout the nation to determine their reaction to the basic subject matter.

On October 9, we wired RKO as follows:

> "TALL IN THE SADDLE" emerged in Third Class with an overall audience acceptance of 44 per cent.
>
> "When tested without cast it is slightly below average with men and with young people 12 to 17, far below average with women and older age-groups.
>
> "Analysis of the comments reveals that lack of interest in the story stems largely from the belief that it is a stereotyped Western, and would be a low-budget production."

There is little to add to this summary. Careful scrutiny of the comments confirms the preliminary report; the majority of movie-goers can detect nothing in this story to differentiate it from run-of-the-mill Westerns produced on a small budget.

The 44 per cent who want to see the picture are largely recruited from the ranks of the "Western" fans. Among the majority who don't want to see the picture, four out of five gave as their reason the fact that they *"don't like Westerns," "don't like cowboy pictures,"* or that it is *"the same old story."*

The New York TIMES of October 12 reported that John Wayne is to play the leading role. We plan to test the story a second time, with cast, to see if we can discover any elements which, if played up in the finished picture, would help to differentiate it from the ordinary Western.

Obviously, if the picture is produced on a lavish scale, with big marquee names and other elements of a major production, the audience potential may be substantially increased. But the fact remains that the acceptance value of the basic subject matter is below normal.

Princeton, October 13, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 180

MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK

The movie-going public expresses a considerable interest in seeing a picture based on the life of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek.

Acting on instructions from RKO, the INSTITUTE staff prepared a synopsis based on the life of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek. Our information was obtained from an article in THIS WEEK magazine, and the book, THREE SISTERS, by Cornelia Spencer.

Employing our standard procedure for testing stories without cast, our interviewers questioned a representative cross-section of movie-goers throughout the country concerning their reaction to the basic subject matter of the picture. The story emerged on the borderline of First Class with an audience acceptance value of 62 per cent.

Ordinarily, we would report this result without reservation as a favorable showing. For if the basis of the appeal of this story were entertainment, the high vote would demonstrate clearly that the property enjoyed the initial advantage of a high audience acceptance value and we could accept the figures at face value.

But the comments indicate that the majority reason for wanting to see the picture is the belief that it would be *"educational"*, *"worthwhile"*, etc.

Commendable as the urge for self-improvement may be, it is a motive that is likely to disappear before the ticket-buyer gets to the box-office—unless the "educational" picture also promises entertainment. Our experience has repeatedly demonstrated that while people like to feel that a picture is *"worthwhile"*, this element is likely to be a plus value only if it is *added* to entertainment—not if it is substituted for it.

However, there are many phases in the life of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek which, if emphasized, would almost certainly increase the entertainment value of the picture without sacrificing its genuine educational contribution.

For example, emphasis on the adventure and excitement of her life in China might appeal to the very group who like to be educated—but want the process painless. And her American school days might provide an opportunity for offsetting any possible lack of interest in a Chinese girl.

As for variations by audience groups, the story is stronger with the upper age-groups than with the younger ticket-buyers. It is stronger with men than with women—possibly because of the implications of adventure and action. And finally, it is slightly stronger with the upper income-groups than with the lower brackets, though the variation is not pronounced. The only segment of the audience with whom it falls below average is youngsters 12 to 17 years old.

When we analyze the reaction to the story according to the basic preferences in pictures of the persons interviewed, we find, as might be expected, that it is particularly strong with persons who like serious drama, historical pictures, and biography.

If RKO goes ahead with the idea, the INSTITUTE would welcome an opportunity to conduct another story test, based on the RKO script.

Princeton, October 13, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 181

SISTER KENNY

Acting on instructions from RKO, the INSTITUTE conducted a nationwide study of the audience acceptance value of SISTER KENNY, a story based on incidents in the life of the Australian nurse.

When tested by our standard procedure for evaluating audience reaction to story material without cast, the property received a vote of 71 per cent, thus ranking high in the First Class. The property enjoys the inherent advantage of a widespread interest in the basic subject matter.

"Widespread" is the correct term, for analysis of the results reveals that the audience acceptance value is above average with all major groups among the movie-going population—young and old, rich and poor. And though it is substantially higher among women than among men, it is still comfortably above average with men.

Study of the comments reveals, as one would expect, that the appeal of the story stems largely from the popular interest in medicine. As we have pointed out before, medicine is one of the outstanding broad-based public interests not only as a subject for motion pictures, but also in editorial content of magazines. And public attention seems to focus on infantile paralysis even more than on other and more prevalent diseases.

Subsequently, we re-tested the story under the title THE LADY FROM AUSTRALIA, with Rosalind Russell. As would be expected from the combination of a strong story and a powerful marquee name, audience reaction was encouraging. The results indicate a want-to-see vote in the neighborhood of 80 per cent—eight points above the average "A" picture—when, and if, the picture reaches the INDEX of Publicity Penetration.

Although more movie-goers associate Miss Russell with comedy roles than with serious dramatic parts, the evidence does not suggest any overwhelming resistance to her appearance in the role of Sister Kenny. As a matter of fact, a considerable number of ticket-buyers expressed an interest in seeing Rosalind Russell in a part different from her recent roles.

IDENTIFICATION OF SISTER KENNY

In a separate study, we asked a cross-section of movie-goers throughout the country whether they had ever heard of Sister Kenny, and, if so, who she is. Sixteen per cent of all movie-goers interviewed were able to identify her correctly. Under the circumstances, this is a high proportion. For although Sister Kenny has received a considerable volume of recent publicity, she has been in the news only a relatively short time. Further, the LIFE magazine feature on Sister Kenny appeared after our field work was completed so that the proportion familiar with her work has now undoubtedly increased.

TITLE TEST

In a separate investigation of the relative strength of the two titles, THE LADY FROM AUSTRALIA emerged slightly ahead of SISTER KENNY. Except for people who are familiar with Sister Kenny herself, neither title conveys an accurate idea of the subject matter of the picture.

When we asked tickey-buyers what they thought the title would be about, replies were as follows:

SISTER KENNY

	%
Family life	20
Nurse, infantile paralysis, etc.	15
Comedy	16
Catholic nun	15
War	2
Miscellaneous (drama, love, business woman, etc.)	21
Don't know	11

LADY FROM AUSTRALIA

	%
War	27
Spy	12
Comedy	10
Romance	6
A nurse	4
Miscellaneous (society, career woman, etc.)	27
Don't know	13

Note that the proportion correctly interpreting the title SISTER KENNY corresponds closely to the proportion able to identify the name in our earlier study.

Princeton, October 21, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 182

THE ROBE (Final)

SUMMARY

It may be useful if we summarize the pro's and con's of audience reaction to THE ROBE.

As a factor in a decision concerning the purchase of THE ROBE, the most useful evidence research can provide is the audience acceptance value of the basic subject matter.

THE ROBE emerged from our tests with an audience acceptance value ranging from 52 to 58 per cent, without cast, thus ranking as a Second Class story.

This is by no means the optimum result. In fact, we have tested four other stories in the last month which have emerged substantially higher.

However, our tests on THE ROBE were conducted in advance of publication. If the book becomes an outstanding best-seller, that fact *in itself,* without changes in the treatment or in any other respect, will increase the audience acceptance value by several points.

Beyond that fundamental fact of audience acceptance value of the basic subject matter, our findings concern ways of handling the property most likely to increase the favorable audience response.

STORY

The salient fact uncovered by our detailed questioning concerning reaction to specific phases of the story is that, of all the major elements of the story, the adventure angle is the one most popular with the majority of movie-goers, and the one responsible for the broad base of the picture's appeal. By contrast, the romance and the religious motif are the primary sources of interest with a minority only.

Thus, the picture is most likely to attain its maximum audience acceptance value if the adventure and action phases of the story are dominant, and if the love story is subordinated. While the religious message can be a plus value, the evidence is clear that most ticket-buyers "don't want a religious picture."

But we should point out that even if the production conforms to this pattern in all respects, the audience acceptance value of the story itself is not likely to increase substantially beyond the maximum figure of 58 per cent first reported. For no matter what the emphasis, the picture will still be "the story of the young Roman soldier who crucified Christ, and won His robe in a dice game." In other words, it will still have adventure, a setting in Bible times, and a strong religious element.

CASTING

In two separate studies, we have measured audience reaction to THE ROBE with Gary Cooper as Marcellus. The findings indicate a want-to-see vote ranging from 76 to 82 per cent, when the picture reaches the INDEX.

When we tested THE ROBE with Errol Flynn as Marcellus, the results indicate a want-to-see vote ranging from 73 to 76 per cent. Thus, as one would expect from the standing of the two actors in the AUDIT OF MARQUEE VALUES, it appears that Gary Cooper in the cast of THE ROBE would sell more tickets to the picture than Errol Flynn.

It must be remembered that our tests were completed before the recent adverse publicity concerning Errol Flynn. We are now re-testing THE ROBE with Flynn to see what effect, if any, audience reaction to the publicity will have on his marquee value in this property. While the results of the October AUDIT, just completed, show that the publicity has alienated only a small fraction of Flynn's following, his acceptability for a religious picture may be altered disproportionately.

Princeton, November 2, 1942.

FINDINGS IN DETAIL

In five separate nation-wide studies, our interviewers have discussed THE ROBE with a representative cross-section of all movie-goers, and have questioned them in detail concerning their reactions. This report presents the opinions of movie-goers on the following production problems:

1. Which elements of the story itself are most popular—religion, adventure, romance, or pageantry and spectacle?
2. Would technicolor increase the appeal of the picture?
3. Would Gary Cooper or Errol Flynn be more acceptable in the role of Marcellus?
4. Is the picture likely to offend religious sentiment?

STORY ELEMENTS

The adventure element of THE ROBE is the most popular phase with the majority of ticket-buyers and is responsible for the broad base of the picture's appeal. Evidence on this score is abundant and convincing.

First, in a study conducted the second week in September, we gave movie-goers a detailed summary of the story, asked them whether or not they would like to see such a picture, and then asked them which part of the story appealed to them most—the adventure, the romance, the religious aspect, or the scenery and technicolor (pageantry).

More than half named "adventure" as the most interesting phase of the story. The detailed results:

Most Interesting Phase of Story

	Per Cent of all Movie-goers
Adventure	53
Scenery, technicolor	21
Religion	15
Romance	11

When we reverse this procedure, and ask which phase is *least* interesting, fewer than one movie-goer in ten names adventure. Thus adventure attracts the most movie-goers, and alienates the fewest.

Least Interesting Phase of Story

	Per Cent of All Movie-goers
Religion	40
Romance	32
Scenery, technicolor	19
Adventure	9

Note that in this table, as one would expect, the various elements emerge almost in reverse order, save that religion accounts for more negative votes than romance.

Second, the want-to-see vote for THE ROBE is higher among movie-goers who like adventure pictures in general than among those who prefer other types. We have been experimenting with procedures which enable us to relate the movie-goers' reaction to a specific picture to his basic preferences. This procedure is helpful in identifying the easiest-to-sell market for the picture. We find that THE ROBE gets its highest vote from people who like adventure pictures and from those who like historical pictures.

Third, when the results are analyzed by audience groups, the contour of THE ROBE is similar to the contour of audience reaction to adventure pictures in general. THE ROBE is stronger with the young, with males, and with the lower income groups than with the old, with women, and the more prosperous. This pattern is characteristic of adventure pictures.

> THE ROBE, however, displays one tendency not common to adventure pictures. It displays marked strength with women over 30—a reflection of the religious element, and of the historical background.

Thus, if the tastes of the public are to serve as a guide in making the picture, it seems clear that the adventure and action phases of the story should be dominant.

Likewise, it is apparent that the *romance* should be subordinate. This does not mean that the love story should be left out altogether. On the contrary, the thread of romance woven through the story affords an opportunity to increase the picture's appeal to women. But the audience for THE ROBE is more interested in an adventure story with a little romance, than in a romance with a little adventure.

As for the *religious motif,* the testimony of movie-goers as reflected by the tables makes it clear that the majority do not want a "religious picture." But again, this fact does not mean that the religious element must be left out. As a matter of practical fact, it couldn't be. Rather, the implication is again clear that movie-goers would prefer to have the adventure story dominant.

Perhaps the ticket-buyers' formula could be summarized as "An adventure story with a message." Time and again, our studies have demonstrated that ticket-buyers like to leave the theater with the feeling that they have gotten something "worthwhile" out of a picture—provided it is entertainment as well.

It is revealing to compare the opinions of people who want to see the picture with attitudes of those who don't on the original question as to which phases of the story are most interesting.

Most Interesting Phase of THE ROBE

	Among Those Who Want to See It	*Among Those Who Don't Want to See It*
	%	%
Adventure	53	51
Religion	20	6
Scenery, technicolor	18	28
Romance	9	15

This comparison serves to re-enforce the implications of the foregoing paragraphs. The *adventure story* is strongest with the easy-to-sell audience for the picture—and also affords the best opportunity for attracting people from outside that audience. The *religious element* is the primary appeal for a substantial proportion of the people who want to see the picture, and so should undoubtedly be retained—but too much emphasis will limit the chances of increasing the audience. The *romance* is the least interesting phase of the picture to the people who say they want to see it, and is not strong enough with those who don't, to justify building up the love story at the expense of the adventure.

VALUE OF TECHNICOLOR

Technicolor will undoubtedly increase the appeal of the picture. We have seen that one movie-goer in five names the scenery, color and pageantry as the most interesting phase of the picture. Furthermore, the proportion is higher among those who now say they don't want to see the picture; and there is no evidence that technicolor will alienate any of those who already want to see it. Thus the use of technicolor presents an opportunity for attracting additional patrons.

As pointed out in our first report, reactions to THE ROBE show a tendency to be conditioned by what the respondent remembers of previous lavish productions. Thus it may be that people would actually be disappointed if THE ROBE were not in technicolor.

PLAYERS FOR MARCELLUS

In two separate studies, we have measured audience reaction to THE ROBE with Gary Cooper as Marcellus. The findings indicate a want-to-see vote ranging from 76 to 82 per cent, when the picture reaches the INDEX.

When we tested THE ROBE with Errol Flynn as Marcellus, the results indicate a want-to-see vote ranging from 73 to 76 per cent. Thus, as one would expect from the standing of the two actors in the AUDIT OF MARQUEE VALUES, it appears that Gary Cooper in the cast of THE ROBE would sell more tickets to the picture than Errol Flynn.*

RELIGIOUS GROUP

As to reactions among religious groups, we find no evidence that the story alienates members of any particular religious faith.

When the adventure element in the story is emphasized, the acceptance value tends to be higher among persons who don't belong to any church, than among church members—but the difference is not pronounced. Likewise, when the religious element is emphasized, the acceptance is slightly higher among church members than among others—but again the difference is not great.

The story seems to be very slightly stronger with Catholics, very slightly weaker with the Jewish, than with members of other faiths. But the difference is too slight to be worthy of any special consideration.

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* As reported earlier, we also made a study in which we first determined the audience acceptance value of THE ROBE without cast, and then asked people who wanted to see the picture to choose between Errol Flynn and Gary Cooper as Marcellus. More people chose Flynn than chose Cooper. We were skeptical of this result, since it was at variance with the AUDIT. Further analysis shows that replies in this instance were too much influenced by the association of these personalities with particular parts. The AUDIT and the results of standard story tests with cast are more reliable guides to casting.

Princeton, November 4, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 183

GOVERNMENT GIRL—II

Last week we reported that GOVERNMENT GIRL, when tested without cast, emerged on the borderline of First Class, with a vote of 60 per cent.

In a second study, we measured the audience acceptance value of this property with Ginger Rogers in the title role. Translating our findings into terms of the INDEX OF PUBLICITY PENETRATION, the results indicate a want-to-see vote between 72 per cent and 76 per cent when and if the picture reaches the INDEX.

Including Miss Rogers' name in our test increased the proportion of ticket-buyers who said they would go to see the picture, slightly more than we would normally expect, in proportion to her present marquee value. Thus it appears that the role is particularly suitable for this player.

When tested with cast, the story remains stronger with women than men, and the reaction is fairly uniform among the different age-groups. However, the presence of Miss Rogers in the cast has increased the appeal of the picture to persons of low income relatively more than to people in the upper brackets.

We must qualify our findings to this extent: since this study was based on the outline of a story not yet written, it reflects only the reaction to the basic subject matter, and to the idea of Miss Rogers in such a story. We are now testing Jean Arthur and Barbara Stanwyck for the part.

The comment of the young wife of an Army doctor is worth emphasizing: *"It doesn't have the horror of war, yet it is something that interests us today. And I like Ginger Rogers."* There is some evidence that the proportion of ticket-buyers who don't want to see actual war pictures is beginning to increase. We shall report fully on this subject in the near future.

Princeton, September 25, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 184

GOVERNMENT GIRL—III

In connection with the casting of Government Girl, we have made three separate studies employing our standard story-test procedure. We tested the property with Ginger Rogers alone, then with Barbara Stanwyck alone, and finally, with Jean Arthur alone.

If we express the findings in terms of the want-to-see vote as reported on the Index of Publicity Penetration, the results are as follows:

Probable Want-to-See Vote
of Government Girl

	Per cent
With Barbara Stanwyck	74 to 79
With Ginger Rogers	72 to 76
With Jean Arthur	66 to 69

The audience potential of the picture equals or exceeds that of the average A picture with either Miss Rogers or Miss Stanwyck in the title role; but the expectancy is definitely lower with Miss Arthur. Thus, results closely parallel the findings of the July Audit.

It must be emphasized that these tests were conducted with only one marquee name. The final want-to-see vote when the picture reaches the Index will, of course, be influenced by the marquee value of other personalities in the cast.

Princeton, November 3, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 185

THE GIBSON GIRL

Mr. Hempstead's memorandum on THE GIBSON GIRL explained that he wanted to know first what kind of a story the public would expect under that title.

Specifically, would movie-goers expect a biographical picture concerning the Langhorne sisters? Or should THE GIBSON GIRL be regarded as a prototype, the symbol of an era, and a story devised to point up the general mood and manner of the time?

Our studies show clearly that more movie-goers associate THE GIBSON GIRL with an era or a type, than with any specific person.

In a study completed before the feature on the Gibson Girl in the October 12 issue of LIFE magazine, we asked a representative cross-section of movie-goers this question: "Judging from the title, what would you expect a movie called THE GIBSON GIRL to be about?"

Only 3 per cent answered that they would expect the picture to concern the life of *the* Gibson Girl, or the life of Charles Dana Gibson. The replies are given below grouped to show the proportions who interpret the phrase, "the Gibson Girl," with some accuracy.

	Those Who Interpreted the Title Fairly Accurately %
1890's	13
Gibson models, Gibson Girl era, not a biography	10
Old-fashioned girl, etc.	6
1900's	4
The Gibson Girl	3

	Those Who Were Probably Guessing %
Life story of a career girl	16
Music and dancing	9
Show girl, night club girl	7
Small town girl, family picture	4
White collar girl	2
Miscellaneous, all wrong	16
Don't know	10

Thus it is evident that very few people would expect THE GIBSON GIRL to be a biographical picture. Though the LIFE feature has undoubtedly acquainted additional movie-goers with the origin of the phrase, it is evident from the replies that even among people who remember the heyday of the Gibson Girl, the majority interpret the title as a symbol rather than as a particular person.

When tested in synopsis, THE GIBSON GIRL with Ginger Rogers registered a result which is the equivalent of a want-to-see vote of 76 per cent on the Index of Publicity Penetration—four points above the average for A pictures. (Our synopsis was based on Mr. Hempstead's verbal outline of the story idea, with the Gibson Girl as a prototype, rather than an actual character.)

THE GIBSON GIRL with Ginger Rogers is found to be considerably above average with female ticket-buyers and considerably below average with males and with younger ticket-buyers. Perhaps the advertising and publicity can go some way towards overcoming this resistance among men and among the younger generation. There is evidence to suggest that the young are interested in the newspaper angle, but are relatively cold to the period atmosphere of the story.

We find that few of the younger generation of movie-goers know anything about the Gibson Girl.* When asked the direct question: "Who is the Gibson Girl?" only 19 per cent of a representative cross-section of ticket-buyers under thirty was able to answer correctly. Among ticket-buyers over thirty the situation was found to be very different:

		Per Cent Able to Identify the Gibson Girl
AGES:	12-30 (65 per cent of the box-office dollar)	19
	31-up (35 per cent of the box-office dollar)	40

In a separate survey we asked ticket-buyers whether they had heard of Charles Dana Gibson, and if so, *"Can you tell me what he did?"* The age variation shows up again as follows:

		Per Cent Identifying Charles Dana Gibson Correctly
AGES:	12-17	5
	18-30	8
	31-up	29
INCOMES:	Prosperous	36
	Upper-Middle	15
	Middle	8
	Poor	7

*** This study was completed too early to reflect the full effect of the feature on the Gibson Girl in the October 12 issue of LIFE.**

In accordance with Mr. Hempstead's memorandum we also asked ticket-buyers to name the *period* with which they associated the Gibson Girl. Replies were as follows:

	Per Cent
The nineties	28
1900's	27
1800's	11
1930-present	11
Twenties	6
1910	5
Don't know	12

The significant fact here is that the title suggested the turn of the century to more than half the ticket-buyers interviewed. (Since we asked respondents to reply in terms of a period, naturally the proportions exceed those indicated by the earlier open question as to the meaning of the title.)

Ticket-buyers were next asked what popular songs or music they associate with the Gibson Girl. Only one ticket-buyer in three was able to name a song. A Bicycle Built For Two received three times as many votes as any other song. Voting was as follows:

1. A Bicycle Built For Two
2. Strawberry Blonde
3. Flora Dora
4. My Gal Sal
5. Merry Widow Waltz
6. After The Ball Is Over
7. In My Merry Oldsmobile
8. Take Me Out To The Ball Game
9. Sidewalks Of New York
10. Come Josephine In My Flying Machine

In the same survey ticket-buyers were asked what characters or people they associate with the Gibson Girl. Only half the persons interviewed attempted to answer the question.

The individuals mentioned most frequently were these:

1. Lillian Russell
2. Diamond Jim Brady
3. Charles Dana Gibson
4. Theodore Roosevelt
5. George M. Cohan

It is significant that, even in this instance when we specifically asked for the names of individuals, almost half the replies were in terms of *types*—again indicating that more people think of the Gibson Girl as a type than in terms of a particular personality.

Princeton, November 3, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 186

OUT OUR WAY

Our studies on audience reaction to OUT OUR WAY are useful mainly in revealing how large a ready-made market exists for a picture based on this newspaper feature.

We assume that the decision to be made is this: Would a picture based on the comic offer a better opportunity for a profitable series than some entirely new idea?

We have collected several kinds of evidence bearing on this point, presented below. It might be useful, in addition, to test a specific "family situation" story, first under the title OUT OUR WAY, and then under some other new title.

We cannot give any reliable estimate of the audience acceptance value of a picture based on the comic, however, except by our standard story-test procedure employing a synopsis.

* * * * *

In a nation-wide survey conducted in December 1940, the INSTITUTE asked a representative cross-section of ticket-buyers: *"Which of the newspaper comic strips do you think would make a good movie?"* Four thousand eight hundred persons were interviewed.

In that survey OUT OUR WAY emerged thirty-third.*

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* See Report LXXXVII.

In a survey conducted during October 1942, the INSTITUTE showed ticket-buyers the titles of six comic strips and asked three questions:

1. *"Are there any of these comic strips you read often?"*

		BLONDIE	DICK TRACY	TERRY AND THE PIRATES	JOE PALOOKA	GASOLINE ALLEY	OUT OUR WAY
		%	%	%	%	%	%
TOTAL		63	48	41	40	32	31
Males		59	54	50	53	38	35
Females		66	41	33	25	26	28
AGES	12-17	79	62	56	50	36	28
	18-30	62	47	44	41	32	34
	31-up	52	39	25	31	30	30

Notice that OUT OUR WAY is the only one of these five comics which is read as much by adults as by children. In spite of this doubtful distinction, OUT OUR WAY has the lowest over-all readership among moviegoers.

The reason for including BLONDIE, even though it is already the subject of a series, was to give a basis of comparison between these possibilities and a picture that has already been produced.

It must be remembered that these results are based on replies of *moviegoers* and will not necessarily parallel the results of a similar question asked of a cross-section of newspaper readers.

2. *"Are there any of these comic strips which you have never read?"*

		OUT OUR WAY	TERRY AND THE PIRATES	GASOLINE ALLEY	JOE PALOOKA	DICK TRACY	BLONDIE
		%	%	%	%	%	%
TOTAL		36	17	16	11	7	6
Males		31	11	10	7	4	5
Females		41	22	21	15	10	7
AGES	12-17	44	3	15	4	2	1
	18-30	31	13	10	8	4	4
	31-up	40	32	26	20	16	12

3. *"Hollywood is thinking of making some movies based on comic strips. Are there any on this list which you would especially enjoy seeing as a movie?"*

	Blondie	Terry and the Pirates	Joe Palooka	Dick Tracy	Gasoline Alley	Out Our Way
	%	%	%	%	%	%
TOTAL	61	45	43	42	29	28
AGES 12-17	88	62	61	57	39	19
18-30	59	47	44	39	27	32
31-up	45	31	28	36	26	28

* * * * *

In a separate survey just completed, we gave ticket-buyers a list of five subjects and asked this question: *"Here is a list of ideas for movies. Would you especially like to see a movie about a newspaper . . . a circus . . . a hospital . . . college . . . based on the comic* Out Our Way." Voting was as follows:

	%
NEWSPAPER	70
HOSPITAL	56
COLLEGE	53
OUT OUR WAY	37
CIRCUS	31

It might be said that Out Our Way started with an unfair advantage since approximately one respondent in every three was already familiar with the characters of the comic strip.

Indeed, the vote for Out Our Way as a movie was twice as great amongst those who had read the comic. But even with this advantage, Out Our Way could muster only a few more votes than the Circus.

Naturally this result is not conclusive. Probably a story with a high audience acceptance value could be built around the situation and characters of Out Our Way. But this test is useful as an indication of the size of the *ready-made audience* for a series under this title.

* * * * *

We asked readers of Out Our Way which characters in the feature are most interesting. Five movie-goers in six named some member of the Willets family, indicating that most people associate the title with the family situation, rather than with the cowboys, machine shop workers, or other characters who sometimes appear under the same title.

Princeton, November 23, 1942.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 187

THE PETTY GIRL—I

Between October 23 and November 4, the INSTITUTE surveyed a cross-section of the movie-goers of the country to determine the type of picture the movie public would expect to carry the title THE PETTY GIRL. In addition to a direct question asking what type of movie would be expected, there were other questions for the purpose of finding out how many movie-goers could identify the name "Petty Girl."

Although about half of the sample had never heard the name, the proportion of movie-goers able to identify "Petty Girl" was relatively high with 43 per cent being able to do so.

The following table shows how the answers divided on this part of the study.

	%
Those who could identify "Petty Girl"	43
Those who had heard of the name but could not identify	5
Those who had never heard of the name	52

For comparison, the proportion found able to identify four other characters in recent studies is shown below:

	%
Sadie Hawkins, comic strip character	44
Tex Rickard	19
Sister Kenny	16
Ruth McKenny	5

The high ratio of "Petty Girl" identification is important, of course, in that the problem of publicity penetration is less difficult with initial title penetration. It is also important, however, for another reason. Where identification of a name is low, it naturally follows that few movie-goers have any basis for typing a movie so titled. Where it is high, however, as in this case, it is of value to know not only what kind of picture will be expected, but also whether the majority of those familiar with the name are those likely to be drawn by the type of picture it most frequently calls to mind.

The following table summarizes the answers to the principal question. Results are shown for all movie-goers and in addition for each of the two groups, (1) those able to identify "Petty Girl," and (2) those unable to do so.

	Replies of All Movie-goers %	*Replies of Those Who Could Identify "Petty Girl"* %	*Replies of Those Who Could Not Identify "Petty Girl"* %
Think movie would be:			
About models	19	39	3
About glamour girls	15	22	9
About petting	6	4	7
A musical	6	10	4
About Petty models	3	8	—
About girls	3	2	5
About "gold diggers"	2	—	3
About the artist	1	1	—
Other answers	40	12	62
Don't know	5	2	7

Those responses classified as "other answers" were in large part literal interpretations of the name such as, *"A mean girl," "A girl who commits small crimes," "A girl in love with a petty officer," "A girl in an insignificant job,"* etc. If identification of "Petty Girl" had not been high, it can be seen that results of the question on type of picture expected would have been negative.

The kinds of movies expected by the majority of those who could identify "Petty Girl" seem to fit more easily into the musical pattern than into any other. Furthermore, it is important to note that this group (those familiar with the name) parallels closely in population characteristics (age, sex, etc.) that section of the movie public which is most partial to musicals—in other words, it is a group likely to be drawn to the type of picture the proposed title most frequently calls to mind.

Princeton, November 24, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 188

THE PETTY GIRL—II

AUDIENCE REACTIONS TO SCREEN MUSICALS

In connection with The Petty Girl, Mr. Fellows asked us to find out the most and least popular elements of screen musicals.

While it is a relatively simple matter to determine the most and least popular elements of any *particular* property, it doesn't necessarily follow that the findings would apply to another property—even to another property of the same type. We can therefore only make the most general observations in discussing this question.

This is an instance in which research is useful chiefly to reaffirm the obvious. We find that music, comedy and dancing are the most popular elements of musical comedies; and that plot, elaborate artificial settings, and long sequences of chorus dancing are the least popular. Certainly these results are no surprise, yet the very fact that audience reaction to musicals follows the expected pattern may be of practical help.

All the evidence we have gathered points to the fact that the music itself is the most popular single element of screen musicals, with comedy and dancing mentioned somewhat less frequently.

This is not to say that comedy and dancing (particularly dancing featuring one or two stars) are unimportant in the scheme of a musical comedy. Actually, the three together—music, comedy, and dancing—are what make this kind of a picture, and screen musical audiences typically enjoy all three—but music is mentioned more frequently, particularly singing.

As for the less popular elements, the stories on which musical comedies are based seem to be not so much unpopular as unimportant—at least among movie-goers who like pictures of this type. Although some musical comedy patrons do say that the stories are usually weak, their reaction seems to be that it doesn't matter. Thus originality of plot apparently makes little difference to the screen musical audience. Furthermore, few of the spontaneous comments offered by musical comedy fans are concerned with story at all, and the volume of voluntary comment is usually a good index to the importance of the issue.

To be sure, one of the commonest criticisms among people who don't like musicals is their belief that pictures of this type don't have enough of a story. Theoretically it may appear that a musical comedy could attract extra patrons from the groups who ordinarily don't go to pictures of this kind by emphasis on the story. Actually, the correct inference probably is that people who don't like musical comedies are not sufficiently interested in music, dancing, and outright comedy to compensate for the necessary story limitations.

The fact that "chorus dancing" emerges as one of the less popular elements does not mean that no such sequences should be used. The objection of movie-goers seems to center on over-long, over-elaborate numbers, which they complain of as becoming tiresome. This attitude is naturally particularly marked among people who don't like musicals anyway, but it is also shared by some musical comedy patrons.

We should emphasize again that musical comedies are more popular with the important age-group 18 to 30, than with other segments of the movie-going public. It is a fortunate fact that THE PETTY GIRL is likewise most widely known among this group. This combination of circumstances should simplify the job of aiming the producton at its easiest-to-sell market.

Princeton, November 27, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 189

THE IRON MAJOR

To measure the acceptance value of The Iron Major's subject matter alone, the story was tested without cast in a nation-wide survey conducted among a representative group of movie-goers between November 24 and 29. The story was tested again during the first week in December with Pat O'Brien cast in the leading role.

Tested without cast, The Iron Major emerged with an audience acceptance value of 58 per cent. This places it close to the level of First Class stories (the dividing line between First and Second Class stories is about 60 per cent). Stories testing at this level can be said to be promising, though not sensational.

The story is very strong in its appeal to those under 30, particularly to the age level 12-17, to men, and to those in the lower income levels. In addition, it registered a strong appeal among those in the middle incomes, but is weak among older, more prosperous movie-goers. The following table shows the variation in audience acceptance by sex, age, and income-groups:

		Audience Acceptance (Tested Without Cast) %
MALES		69
FEMALES		47
AGES:	12-17	70
	18-30	61
	31-up	46
INCOMES:	Upper	49
	Middle	58
	Lower	63

This pattern of audience acceptance is like that of many pictures which have done good business. Noteworthy, furthermore, is the fact that it closely follows the pattern of Pat O'Brien's popularity among these groups.

The nearest parallel that comes to mind so far as story is concerned is the picture KNUTE ROCKNE. Rockne was probably more widely known than Cavanaugh, however, and it goes without saying that his name contributed greatly to the picture's drawing power. Anent the average moviegoer's familiarity with Cavanaugh, we are now investigating this point and shall be able to add some information relating to it shortly.

Tested with Pat O'Brien cast in the leading role, the story's acceptance value was 64 per cent, an increase of six points over its acceptance without cast. This is about the increase that would be normally expected to result from the addition of a star with O'Brien's marquee rating.

The following table compares results of THE IRON MAJOR with tests made recently on other O'Brien vehicles:

	Audience Acceptance (Tested Without Cast) %
THE IRON MAJOR	58
BOMBARDIER	69
THE NAVY COMES THROUGH *	57

An estimate of the probable level of want-to-see for this property when it reaches the INDEX indicates that it will be somewhere between 70 and 75 per cent. For comparison it will be helpful to refer to the pictures on the INDEX during the past few months which have had a similar average want-to-see vote. Of course, it is important to bear in mind that it would be highly speculative to draw from this that THE IRON MAJOR would necessarily do as well as the most successful of such pictures, since the other factors in a property's potential as a money-maker are so important. We refer here, of course, to such elements as cost of production, quality of direction, and degree of publicity penetration. Such a comparison, nevertheless, together with the earlier one which compared the results of THE IRON MAJOR test with the test for THE NAVY COMES THROUGH, does indicate that the property has good possibilities, and is likely to be a profitable investment, particularly if it is supported by high publicity penetration.

About half of those who expressed a desire to see this picture gave as their reason that they *"liked football and sports pictures."* Therefore, it seems possible that the title itself might have a stronger pull if the football angle were brought out more clearly. To investigate this possibility, a title test might be worthwhile.

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* Tested under the title BATTLE STATIONS.

Princeton, December 12, 1942

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 190

ALL BRIDES ARE BEAUTIFUL

We have tested without cast the audience acceptance value of the story All Brides Are Beautiful. The story emerged as Third Class, with an audience acceptance of 43 per cent.

Stories which test at this general level are low in basic appeal. Although with the present high box-office level stories in Third Class can be expected to do better than usual, the fact remains that such stories are inherently weak and the chances of their being a profitable investment are much less than stories which rate by our standard as First Class or high Second Class.

To be sure, it is conceivable that a picture based on a Third Class story could do A business, but in order to do A business, it would have to receive maximum values in every other respect—a strong cast, high publicity penetration, skillful direction, and a generally good production. You have to add a lot more to a Third Class property in order to make it a successful A picture, than to a Second or First Class story. Since these other values require a big investment, the profit margin will certainly be greater if a story of higher audience potential can be found.

An analysis of the story's acceptance value reveals that it is extremely weak with males and with the exception of women 18 to 30 is unusually weak in the lower age levels. Among males the story has an acceptance of only 32 per cent, while among females, at 54 per cent it is the equivalent roughly of middle Second Class. By ages, the lowest interest was registered in the 12-17 age-group.

The following table shows audience acceptance for the picture by sex, age, and frequency:

		Per Cent
TOTAL		43
MALES		32
FEMALES		54
AGES:	12-17	29
	18-30	44
	31 up	49
THOSE WHO ATTEND:		
	Less than once a week	38
	Once a week	46
	More than once a week	44

Reasons given for lack of interest in the story indicated that many felt it lacked originality, or as one respondent said: *"It has been done a thousand times."* Furthermore, there was a generally expressed feeling that it would be ordinary and dull, and the notion that it would be depressingly everyday is typified by the comment: *"You have enough troubles of your own."* Furthermore, most of the younger members of the movie audience have very little, if any, recollection of the depression and as a subject it appears to have little intrinsic interest for them.

The consensus of opinion among boys under eighteen was that the picture would lack the action necessary to make bearable to them the dullness of love and marriage! Males 18-30 complained that it would be depressing and the principal objection of men over thirty was their feeling that a picture of that nature could only be ordinary or subnormal since the story was trite. Younger females who are not interested in the picture find it lacking in excitement and feel it is dated. In the group where it meets with most favor, women 18-30, there is interest because it sounds "romantic," "true to life," and "it could happen to anybody."

Princeton, January 20, 1943

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 191

SWAN SONG

When tested by our standard story test procedure, SWAN SONG (The Life of Marie Dressler) emerged as a borderline First Class property, with an audience acceptance value of 60 per cent.

This is a promising showing, and ordinarily would be sufficient evidence of a satisfactory audience reaction to the property. But analysis of the reasons why movie-goers want to see the picture reveals a situation which must be taken into account: the appeal of the property stems more from an affection for Marie Dressler than from an inherent interest in her life story. In the words of one ticket-buyer, *"I would go to the movie simply as a tribute to Marie Dressler."* That attitude is undoubtedly an asset. At the same time, since most theatergoers admit frankly that they go to the movies for entertainment, it is a question whether the desire to pay tribute to an actress is enough to get people to buy a ticket for a picture about her life—unless the story is inherently interesting as well.

For this reason, we have already undertaken a separate study approaching this problem from another angle.

As would be expected, the story is strongest with the older age-groups, and is markedly weak with ticket-buyers under 18. Likewise, while very strong with women, it is weak with men.

		Per Cent
MALES		46
FEMALES		73
AGES:	12-17	47
	18-30	62
	31-up	65

Princeton, January 22, 1943

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Report 192

NIGHT IN BOMBAY

With an audience acceptance of 61 per cent, Night In Bombay ranks as a First Class story. Stories at this level or higher are unusual and are valuable assets. Obviously, less effort is required to build up good box-office for a picture based on such stories than is necessary with stories which appeal to a smaller group.

The story is particularly strong among those 12-30 (especially 12-17), and among the more frequent movie-goers. Moreover, the story is well received by both males and females. While it is rather weak with those who attend less frequently, the story's strong points far outweigh this weakness.

The acceptance value for Night In Bombay by groups follows:

		Per Cent
TOTAL		61
MALES		58
FEMALES		63
AGES:	12-17	70
	18-30	61
	31-up	52
THOSE WHO ATTEND:		
	More than once a week	71
	Once a week	63
	Less than once a week	46

Analysis of the comments of movie-goers indicates that interest in such a picture is based primarily on its elements of adventure and excitement and the colorful atmosphere to be expected in a picture with its setting in the romantic East. By far the largest number of comments referred to these aspects of the property.

Princeton, January 26, 1943

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 193

PICTURE IDEA FOR CARY GRANT

Mr. Edington asked us to find out how movie-goers would like the idea of a picture starring Cary Grant as a gentleman gambler, operating on a Mississippi river boat in the old South.

Our studies indicate that audience reaction to this idea is generally favorable. Naturally, since the actual story is still rather nebulous, it is impossible to measure the audience acceptance value and to estimate the eventual want-to-see vote as accurately as is possible when the story line is fully developed. Still, it is evident that there is no widespread resistance to the idea; on the contrary, a majority of ticket-buyers say they would like to see such a picture.

Our procedure was as follows: We developed a synopsis based on the information supplied us, including the fact that the picture would be in Technicolor. We then tested it by our standard story-test procedure under the title DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI. The results indicate a want-to-see vote well above the average of A pictures, in the neighborhood of 78 per cent.

The popularity of the idea increases with age—that is to say, the older the ticket-buyer the more likely he is to want to see the picture—but the difference is not marked. Likewise, the picture is somewhat stronger among women than among men. But the variations among audience groups are not pronounced, except in one respect: the idea is markedly weaker with the upper income-group.

Two important qualifications may well be borne in mind in considering plans for this production:

1. While most movie-goers say they would not *object* to the idea of Cary Grant in a costume picture, the majority say they would prefer to see him in a modern story, preferably a light comedy. That is the reaction of ticket-buyers: They leave to Hollywood the assignment, difficult at this juncture, of devising a story which is at once a light comedy and completely contemporary.

2. The great majority (88 per cent) of ticket-buyers would expect such a picture to have music and dancing. This evidence was produced by a direct question.

Dominant reasons for liking the idea, aside from the star, were: an interest in pictures about the South; a favorable reaction to Technicolor and "scenery"; the implications of adventure; and the belief that the picture would be "good entertainment."

A few people said they would like the picture because it would give them a chance to get completely away from the war.

Princeton, January 27, 1943

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 194

WALK AWAY FROM 'EM

When tested without cast by our standard story test procedure* WALK AWAY FROM 'EM emerged with an over-all audience acceptance value of 56 per cent—middle Second Class.

Second Class stories include those with an audience acceptance value of 50 to 60 per cent. We have found that when one or more major marquee names are cast in Second Class properties, if the picture is supported by average publicity penetration, it will normally do at least average A business at the box-office. Currently, of course, average A business is big. *However, stories with this rating are not strong enough to do A business with only minor marquee names, or with subnormal publicity penetration.*

Specifically, if moderate marquee strength can be provided for WALK AWAY FROM 'EM, with average publicity penetration it should do as well or better than the average A picture. With a cast such as Fred MacMurray and Loretta Young, for example, the audience acceptance value of 56 per cent is high enough to yield a want-to-see vote of 72 to 76 per cent on the Index of Audience Potential—the equal or better of the average for all A pictures.

The story of WALK AWAY FROM 'EM appeals primarily to males, to young people, to frequent theatergoers, and to the lower economic groups —who now have money in their pockets for theater tickets. Conversely, the story is weak with people over 30, particularly with women. The figures below show the variation.

Audience Acceptance Value

	%
MALES	64
FEMALES	49
AGES: 12-17	77
18-30	58
31-up	39
Upper and Middle Incomes	51
Lower Incomes	62
Less Than Once a Week	40
Once a Week	58
More Than Once a Week	73

***Standard story test procedure: Our highly trained interviewers talk to a scientifically selected cross-section of ticket-buyers throughout the nation, showing them carefully prepared descriptions of the subject matter of *several* proposed pictures. They question them in detail concerning each, finding out whether or not they would want to see each one, and why.**

This pattern, characteristic of many successful pictures, is typical of the contour of audience reaction to aviation and adventure pictures. Quite different audience groups are likely to be drawn to romantic dramas. This situation suggests that the aviation and adventure elements of WALK AWAY FROM 'EM are primarily responsible for its appeal, rather than the love story.

Analysis of movie-goers' reasons for wanting to see the picture confirm this suggestion: the majority reason of those who want to see the picture is their interest in aviation and adventure.

The following table, classifying the comments of those who want to see the picture, tells the story:

	%
Airplanes, war, pilots	48
Exciting, adventure	27
Amusing	7
Love story	5
Other—like story in general	13

It seems important, therefore, that the adventure theme be developed as fully as possible. At the same time, it is apparent that the three-cornered love story is no handicap, and it offers an opportunity for increasing the picture's appeal to women. But if the romance is allowed to dominate the story, there is danger of weakening its pull for men and boys, now the groups most responsible for the story's rather strong showing.

Incidentally, we used the phrase "devil-may-care test pilot" in our tests—a phrase which in this and other tests has proved to have a good deal of come-on.

Princeton, January 20, 1943

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 195

RED RYDER

This is the final report on RED RYDER. Some additional information not reported previously is included here, and related to our earlier findings.

As a final check on RED RYDER we paralleled our method of measuring the ready-made audience acceptance for OUT OUR WAY, the results of which appeared in Report 186, November 23, 1942. "Ready-made" audience acceptance was taken to be that which derived directly from the comic's readership among the movie audience.

The following two questions used in the OUT OUR WAY study were repeated for RED RYDER: (1) *"Are there any of these comic strips you read often?"*; (2) *"Are there any on this list which you would especially enjoy as a movie?"* Four of the more popular comics and OUT OUR WAY were selected for comparison with RED RYDER.

The results of the question, *"Are there any of these comic strips you read often?"* follow:

	BLONDIE %	DICK TRACY %	TERRY AND THE PIRATES %	JOE PALOOKA %	OUT OUR WAY %	RED RYDER %
TOTAL	63	48	41	40	31	22
MALES	59	54	50	53	35	28
FEMALES	66	41	33	25	28	16
AGES: 12-17	79	62	56	50	28	28
18-30	62	47	44	41	34	24
31-up	52	39	25	31	30	14

The next table shows the results of the question, *"Are there any on this list which you would especially enjoy seeing as a movie?"*

	Blondie	Terry and the Pirates	Joe Palooka	Dick Tracy	Out Our Way	Red Ryder
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	61	45	43	42	28	18
Ages: 12-17	88	62	61	57	19	22
18-30	59	47	44	39	32	17
31-up	45	31	28	36	28	16

As shown in these tables, Red Ryder has a comparatively low readership and therefore has a relatively low ready-made audience. A measurement of the kind used here obviously does not represent any attempt to register the total potential of a Red Ryder picture—it measures solely the proportion of the movie audience already well acquainted with the character and interested in seeing his adventures on the screen.

Our earlier report indicated the general audience acceptance of a picture in the mold to be expected of one based on Red Ryder. That test is a natural supplement to the above since it measures the appeal of a Red Ryder yarn for those who are not frequent readers of the strip as well as for those who are. As shown in the earlier report, a typical Red Ryder story line would have a very low audience acceptance, the story test yielding an audience acceptance of 23 per cent, or only five points higher than the strip's appeal deriving directly from its readership. Reasons given for not favoring it were generally that it sounded like a run-of-the-mill western and likely to appeal only to youngsters.

Princeton, February 9, 1943

AUDIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REPORT 196

OUR HEARTS WERE YOUNG AND GAY

OUR HEARTS WERE YOUNG AND GAY has an audience acceptance value of 68 per cent which places it well up in the First Class. In addition it has the advantage of high acceptance among all of the principal groups of movie-goers as shown in the following table:

		Per Cent
TOTAL		68
MALES		57
FEMALES		78
AGES:	12-17	74
	18-30	70
	31-up	63
INCOMES:	Upper and Middle	66
	Lower	69
THOSE WHO ATTEND:	Less Than Once a Week	68
	Once a Week	69
	More Than Once a Week	68

As will be noted above, the story has its highest acceptance among females and its lowest among males. The difference between the vote of these two groups was the same in each of the three age levels.

An analysis of the comments makes it apparent that the story's strength lies in its comedy elements. Another source of its strength, however, is the expectation it will be swift-paced and full of incident. In addition there are those (about one movie-goer in ten) who have read and enjoyed the book or its condensation in READER'S DIGEST.

The chief adverse comment was to the effect that it would be silly and consist of an improbable series of events. Also the fact that the story has as its background the early 1920's comes in for some unfavorable comment, in most cases from younger movie-goers.

Princeton, February 19, 1943